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VERY DIRTY LAUNDRY

This week two groups of soldiers are appearing before Polish courts-martial. A number of Polish Jews and some thirty Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians are being charged with desertion. In both cases the courts-martial must be regarded as test cases. The number of Jews who seek the opportunity of joining the ranks of the British Army instead of serving in Polish units is about 200, while there are about 1,000 Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians similarly situated. If it is said that to discuss the issues involved in these courts-martial when large-scale operations are in prospect is to wash very dirty linen in public, our reply must be that already made in the House of Commons a fortnight ago. Military efficiency and vital principles are both involved in the unhappy situation of these 1,600 men. If there is an apology to make, it is for having waited so long in speaking openly.

Some of the facts have been known for a year and more. Recently the situation has been rendered much worse by the addition to the Polish Forces here of some thousands of Poles captured from the German Army in North Africa. These men are apparently as fanatical in their anti-Semitism as in their anti-Soviet feeling. Delay in raising the matter has been due to the hope that the Polish Government, which has willingly taken steps to discourage anti-Semitism, would be able to settle the matter after private discussion with the Foreign Office; the M.P.s who took up the matter of the Jewish deserters were able to report that their case was so far conceded that 200 Jewish deserters had been transferred to British units. But that seems to be the limit of their success. Mr. Eden and Mr. Law have now informed the House of Commons that they cannot again intervene.

In a speech universally admired as both moderate and persuasive, Mr. Driberg stated the case for the 600 remaining Jews to a House of Commons which was shocked by the indisputable facts he revealed. The life of the Jews in the Polish Army, which seems scarcely less anti-Semitic than a division of S.S., is intolerable. They have been told that every Pole has two bullets, one for the enemy and one for a Jew. Those who have been in contact with the 600 who are still in the Polish Army agree that they are by no means "touchy" or "over-sensitive"; they are, on the contrary, tough, technically trained fighting men, whom the Polish Command naturally dislikes losing from its armed strength.

The position of the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians is no better. These men are not conscripts; most of them sacrificed good jobs in the Argentine and volunteered to serve in what they believed was the cause of freedom. As Orthodox Christians they had originally emigrated after the Russian-Polish Treaty of 1921 from what was then godless Russia. As volunteers for the Polish Army after the Sikorski-Stalin agreement of 1941, they found that they were compelled to attend Roman Catholic services and to accept treatment as inferior and foreign interlopers. In at least one case known to us suicide seemed the only way out. Recently their position has been made worse as a result of the open hostility of their officers to the Soviet Union. They have had to listen to Polish officers informing their units that when they reach Russia the Soviet Union will be the enemy. They are, in fact, asked to fight against their own country which is also their and our Ally. In one case we have investigated, a Ukrainian was asked by a Polish officer why he had come here. He replied, "To fight for freedom." The officer retorted that he was here "to fight for Poland." The soldier replied that he was a Ukrainian. The officer said, "We hate you foreigners." The same man was told by an officer that he would never get to France because he would be thrown overboard in the Channel. These remarks cannot be discounted as the irresponsible pleasantries of camp life. There is not the slightest doubt that these men do expect to find themselves treated as enemies by their own officers, and even if threats of murder should not be taken too seriously, they reveal a state of tension and hostility which is obviously dangerous to discipline and morale.

The reasons given by the spokesmen of the Foreign Office to justify the refusal to transfer these minority groups into British units are first that it would be bad for discipline if soldiers can get their way by deserting, and, secondly, that on the eve of great military operations, it is damaging to transfer trained men from technical jobs. To these objections we should reply that, we fully realise the difficulty of condoning even technical desertion, but that we cannot believe in the military advantages of keeping these men in Polish units against their will. The effect of maintaining in the expeditionary force an explosive and indefensible situation of this kind is far more dangerous than any mere transference of men can possibly be, and to have men nominally fighting as comrades, but really threatening each other with murder, is to invite the most shocking scandals when the offensive begins.

We cannot believe that the British authorities, who know the facts and express sympathy with the victims of this perverted nationalism, will maintain their refusal to intervene. Sosnowski's Army has been created under British auspices, and only has the power to hold these courts-martial under a special authority conferred by the British Parliament. The British Government has the obligation as well as the right to see that the powers we have given to our Polish Allies are not abused. To refuse to transfer these men would be to perpetuate iniquity, to mock the cause of freedom, for which many still believe we are fighting, and incidentally to run risks of really grave and damaging incidents within the Allied armies when the offensive begins on the Continent.

Muzzled Correspondents

Public concern at the course of the campaign on the Indo-Burmese frontier has been increased by the refusal of five war correspondents on that front to send any further despatches until their newspapers have secured a relaxation of what they regard as needlessly repressive censorship. The circumstances behind this incident, which has already provoked bitter American press comment recalling the fatal "hush-hush" censorship policy in Malaya, have not been explained. Was the blue pencil wielded by field censors acting under the order of Admiral Mountbatten, or is there an additional censorship on despatches

from the Burma front exercised by the military authorities in Delhi under General Auchinleck? It would be surprising if accredited correspondents at this stage of the war complained about field censorship exercised legitimately on strict security grounds, and it seems more likely that the authorities in India have been pursuing their consistent policy of suppressing any criticism which, in their view, would reflect upon the Government of India. The results of such a policy are bound to be deplorable; for, with the impression thus created—however unjustifiably—that bad news is being withheld, bazaar rumours are bound to flourish through the length and breadth of India.

Red Army at the Gates

In the European theatre of war, the news of the past week makes a picture in which Russian military success, political negotiations and 1914 memories are the ingredients. Brilliantly conceived and executed, the reconquest of the Crimea by the Red Army is, in the strategic sense, a sideshow: the 12 Axis divisions forming the garrison were effectively isolated; and, though the acquisition of the Crimean airfields is a gain for the Red Air Force, the recovery of Sebastopol as a naval base has little immediate bearing on operations. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that in staging their blitzkrieg on the Crimea, the Russians had as their primary aim the creation in Rumania of the impression of overwhelming Russian strength. We have yet to see what the final reactions in Rumania and on the part of Marshal Antonescu will be. Though the Russian armistice terms are reported to include the tempting bait of the restoration of Transylvania, Russian demands for large reparations may be a stumbling block as they were in the case of the Finnish negotiations. Moreover, indiscriminate Anglo-American bombing of Bucharest seems unhelpful to Russian diplomacy. Rumania, however, is in a position much more vulnerable than that of Finland, and though von Ribbentrop has declared that the German Army will defend Rumania as it would defend Berlin, all the available evidence suggests that German reinforcements (which are now apparently being sent East from France and other fronts) are going not to Rumania but to the Lemberg sector. How large these reinforcements are we do not know; but the German broadcasters' insistence that they have not been withdrawn from any other front, but have come from some mythical central reserve, suggests strongly that the Russians have compelled the enemy at this crucial stage of the war to transfer, as they did in 1914, from West to East forces which the West Wall can ill spare.

Democratic Government for Italy?

For seven months Marshal Badoglio has headed the weak and compromised administration of liberated Italy. His rule has not been a happy one. Torn by internal dissensions, battleground for two foreign armies, Italy has reached the depths of social disintegration. Her recovery is bound up with the formation of a democratic Government which could really organise her demoralised people and devastated economic and political life. Whilst the deadlock between the democratic parties and Marshal Badoglio continued there was little chance of any radical change. Now, with the vexed question of the monarchy put on one side for the time being, with the Allied Advisory Council recommending a radical reconstruction of the Government, and with the decision of the Opposition groups to swallow some of their principles for the sake of practical action, the prospect of collaboration between the democratic parties and Marshal Badoglio is brighter than at any time since the armistice. How far this new development is the result of Soviet pressure it is difficult to say. But Mr. Vyshinsky claims that it was on the initiative of his Government that the question of broadening the Government immediately, without waiting for the capture of Rome or for other hypothetical situations, was raised. This supports the attitude taken by *Izvestia* when it justified the Soviet recognition of Badoglio by claiming that it was the first step taken by the U.S.S.R. to ensure that, in spite of the British and American Governments, the decisions of the Moscow Conference on Italy should really be carried out. Inside Italy, the Communists must have been mainly responsible for persuading their colleagues in the Liberation Committee to work with a Prime Minister whom they had so energetically denounced. Until we know more definitely the composition of any Cabinet that is to emerge from the negotiations, too much optimism may be premature. We hope it will include not only Croce and Sforza but also Socialists and Communists in leading positions. Unless the masses feel they are genuinely represented, it will not be easy to build democracy out of the ruins of Italy.

Freedom of Labour

How far is the new Defence Regulation a necessary or wise safeguard against a new wave of strikes? No one who has had any close contact with industrial workers, either before or during the war, sees wisdom in threats of this kind. In fact, they are more likely to produce a reaction of irritation and defiance, especially when the great majority of strikes are by workers who feel that they have a legitimate grievance and who would resent as furiously as the *Daily Mail* the interference of "agitators" from outside their own ranks. Now, to the accompaniment of a Trotskyist scare, we have an Order which goes far beyond the Trades Disputes Act of 1927 in its repressive powers. The Order, ostensibly, is not aimed at anyone who discusses strike action within "an authorised trade union meeting." Will exemption from penalties apply to shop stewards? We doubt it. Mr. Bevin wants to end provocation by outsiders. Who has been telling him exaggerated stories about the influence of the Trotskyists? The Government, in spite of its excuses, already possesses sufficient powers to deal effectively with their activities, if it chose. If the Government follows the regulation by a serious effort to clear up the muddle about wages and working conditions in the disturbed industries, it may succeed in spite of the Order. Otherwise, it has only made the position worse by an unnecessary and provocative act which will be rightly regarded in the mines and factories as one further step—taken with the consent of the Transport House "bosses"—towards a regimented industrial economy on Corporative lines.

The Miners Accept

Last week's Miners' Conference, in accepting the Government's wage plan without the enforcement of a ballot vote, took a course which the miners' leaders, with their strong tradition of referring everything back to their constituents, usually refuse to take. They did the same thing in 1926, as the only way open to them of bringing to an end the hopeless and prolonged stoppage after the collapse of the General Strike. On the present occasion the executive's authority to sign the terms was made contingent on the satisfactory clearing-up of certain outstanding points. These affect the operation of the new agreement in relation to conditions differing from one coalfield to another, especially in the matter of the eligibility for advances of classes of men who usually get a wage above the minimum level. This, of course, has been the cause of the difficulty all through. If the Government had behaved sensibly at the outset in its treatment of the skilled men and the varying special allowances, the recent bout of strikes need never have occurred. Even now the Government's handling of the problem seems to remain niggardly, and the danger of local troubles may not be over. In mining, the variations in local customs count for a great deal; we can only hope that the adjustments now to be made will go far enough to give things a reasonable chance of settling down. But we cannot feel any strong assurance on this point; after all the basic trouble remains untouched, and, as long as "dual control" exists, there are likely to be plenty of causes of friction, even if the matter of wage-rates has been disposed of.

Labour's Post-war Water Policy

Of all our various health services, water-supply is the most ill-organised and muddled. The Labour Party has done well to anticipate this week's White Paper with a comprehensive plan for a new system of water supply and distribution. After an examination of the development of water services, the curiously complicated structure of interests and undertakings and the conflicting areas of administration through catchment boards, sewerage authorities, fishery boards and canal owners, the Labour Party proposes a National Water Commission to control water resources and their use throughout the country. The proposals give especial emphasis to the need for co-ordination between supplies and main drainage and for the most efficient use of our limited and heavily taxed water resources. The National Water Commission would work through a relatively small number of Regional Commissions, which would be responsible to the National Commission for the supply and use of water in their area. Selection of the personnel by the Minister of Health should be from persons with experience of Local Government administration, labour conditions and of the technical problems involved. Whilst they would have a considerable measure of independence, they would be answerable to Parliament through the Ministry of Health. The functions of other Government Departments in connection with water-agriculture, fisheries, canals and fire-fighting supplies would be transferred to the National Water Commission. For the purposes of water supply—which must be organised on a geographical basis irrespective of municipal boundaries—joint water supply boards are proposed, which would work under the supervision of the Regional Commissions. The National Water Commission would buy out all private water companies on a compensation basis of net reasonably maintainable profit—the rate of compensation generally accepted by the Labour Party—and also take over the municipal undertakings. The debate on yet another case for a system of planning has opened. Will it end as inconclusively as the others?

Budget-to-come

Another financial year has begun, and we are awaiting another War Budget. It is being awaited, this year, with many fewer hopes and fears than in any previous year of war. In effect, war finance has become stabilised to a quite remarkable extent, with taxation bringing in rather more than half the expenditure, and a buoyancy of revenue, as the national income expands, which seems likely to preserve this proportion over the coming year even if taxes are left entirely unchanged. The most uncertain element is "Lease-Lend in Reserve," which will presumably be a good deal affected by further American arrivals and by the launching of the Second Front in Europe. The combined influence of these factors cannot be estimated; but they are unlikely to make enough difference seriously to upset the Chancellor's calculations. Over the past year expenditure rose but slowly. It was actually lower in the final quarter than in the corresponding quarter of the previous year—a fact which makes nonsense of the contention that a reasonable addition to Service men's pay and allowances would land the country in an inflation. Our war finances have, on the whole, been remarkably well managed—very much better than in the last war—and there is nothing much left for the Chancellor to do, unless he is ready, as he presumably is not yet, to remodel the income tax or to direct his attention to financial issues, such as the system of taxing motor cars or the allowances to be made for reserves reinvested, which are of concern rather for the post-war than for the war period.

PARLIAMENT : A Prod from Hull

Wednesday, noon.

THERE were two divisions on Tuesday. Neither shook the Government. The first one was on the Pensions (Increase) Bill, which W. J. Brown denounced as "thoroughly immoral"; at a later stage, he said, he would "characterise it in language which will scarify and cauterise the Chancellor of the Exchequer." Pethick-Lawrence seemed satisfied with the modest increases proposed by the Government; and Brown, proposing by manuscript amendment an increase of 30 instead of 10 per cent. for certain classes of pensioners, coaxed only three Members into his lobby. There were some abstentions.

Hull, a much-blitzed seaport, provided the occasion for the other division. Hull wants to go ahead now with its reconstruction plans. Hull Members, Tory and Labour, spoke for this; non-Hull Tories and Socialists said that this vast national problem couldn't be dealt with in a piecemeal, parochial way. W. S. Morrison responded in a speech implying somewhat less than usual of procrastination; so 66 voted for Hull, 177 against. Loyal but Leftish Labour Members expressed a peculiar pleasure in being able to vote simultaneously for the Government, with Aneurin Bevan, and against Mr. Muff, who assented gladly to the allegation that he was "the most fervent supporter of the Government in the House." He is, however, a Hullite. The "psychology" of Hull, he said, was "epitomised" in the remark made by a small girl who had spent night after night sitting on a concrete seat in a shelter. Muff reported that "she simply stretched herself and said 'Oh, Mum, my bum is numb.'"

From discussing the affairs of 300,000 citizens, the House proceeded to a perfunctory but heated debate on matters affecting 120,000,000 Indians. Amery referred to Congress in a way which those who disagreed with him called "provocative" and those who agreed with him "factual"; no doubt the terms are not mutually exclusive. The usually mild Pethick-Lawrence was one of the exception-takers. If Amery had not realised that he was being controversial, he said, "he is totally unfit for the office which he holds." Godfrey Nicholson thought this attack "astounding," and ended a brief speech with the exemplary words, "I feel in such an extraordinary bad temper about it that I shall not say any more."

At question-time Grigg told Dugdale that German prisoners were to be allowed to buy *Die Zeitung;* Bracken, in the course of a long, prepared reply on a "frenzied" item in the Hearst press, took the novel course of asking himself a question; Stokes and the Prime Minister accused each other of untruthfulness; Shinwell failed to draw the Prime Minister on the "concessions" to the Americans in civil aviation spoken of by Lord Beaverbrook; and the Prime Minister got a warm cheer when he defended the League of Nations (which has not, he said, been "properly backed up") against the cynicism of Petherick.

Oliver Lyttelton, cornered on tanks, produced this bromide: "We have taken what we think will be the appropriate steps." Honourable Members: "Can't you say yes or no?" George Griffiths (a Yorkshireman): "Doan't tie 'em down lak thaat!"

PONTIFEX MINOR

POLITICS AND JUNGLE WARFARE

IT is pleasanter to read about Russia's victories than to follow the far from exhilarating campaigns in Burma; there is also the sound excuse that the censor allows little news to trickle through, either from the Front or from India, and what there is of it has a deep official tinge. Scanty though our information is, we know enough to feel concern. The two Japanese offensives in the South and North of the Imphal plateau have had a disturbing measure of success: the latter movement, as it sweeps past Kohima is aimed at the long and vulnerable supply route through Bengal, Assam and Manipur on which both Chungking and General Stilwell's mixed force depend for such help as their allies can give them. There lies the drama of these operations: the Japanese are trying to do in this frontier jungle what they have been doing all round the coasts of Asia, from Tientsin to Rangoon, during six years; they are isolating the Chinese. The railway at which their advancing column aims carries our supplies up from the Bay of Bengal to its terminus at Ledo. Thereafter they must be ferried over forbidding mountains by air, while coolies and engineers struggle to build a road that will one day be legendary, over some of the most forbidding precipices and ravines in all Asia. Depending on these precarious communications is the Chinese army under the American General Stilwell which is still a long way from Myitkyina. Somewhere to the south of that region is our airborne force which lost in General Wingate its dynamic leader. The threat to China's communications may be countered before any real harm is done; but even so this incident serves to remind us how nearly complete is the siege which throttles China.

Dramatic this Japanese thrust is in another sense. The enemy is now on Indian soil. He has at his disposal an Indian force which the Bengali leader Subhas Chandra Bose, a former president of the Indian National Congress, has induced to fight under his command. Whether it fights well or ill, with faith or merely because it must, we do not know. It is highly improbable that the Japanese would launch a serious threat to India at this point or at this season. None the less the effect of this penetration on the imagination of the masses in Bengal may be considerable. They are still struggling with the epidemic scourges that follow famine: the deaths due to that calamity are said to be mounting towards three millions and no one, with food prices four times the normal level, can be sure of quick improvement. No one has come well out of the test, neither the British in India nor the Indian politicians who administer Bengal. Mr. Bose may have kept the big following he used to have among the reckless younger generation. He exploits the argument that Japan commands rice enough for Bengal's needs. It is a significant fact that in his propaganda what he stresses is not politics, but his plans for ending Indian poverty. Behind him is Burma, which the Japanese have "liberated" from British rule. So far as we can gather, they have done a good deal to please the Burmese, who are now in control of their own internal affairs. No sense of racial inferiority afflicts them in their dealings with the Japanese, many of whom are their fellow-Buddhists. Across two censorships it is impossible to be sure of anything, but our impression is that large numbers of Burmese are content that our rule over them has come to an end. Mr. Churchill's reckless refusal to promise Burma Dominion self-government contributed, with our military mistakes, to the loss of this province. Political mismanagement in Burma, as in India and Malaya, has smoothed the path of the Japanese. So long as the mass of the Indian population, with its trusted leaders still in prison, remains sullen and hostile under our flag, our offensives against the Japanese, when we are ready to launch them, will be merely military operations by our troops; they will not have behind them the support of the people, nor will it be the hope and the determination of Asia's millions to which they give effect.

Lord Mountbatten, meanwhile, has transferred his headquarters from Delhi to Ceylon. We do not suppose that any decisive operations can begin in the Far East until the war in Europe is won; but the lines which our strategy is to follow will be, and should be, laid down now, since our preparations will be effected by the choice made among several rival plans. We surveyed these alternatives in our issue of March 18th ("The Still-vexed Pacific"). Some rely on a direct attack upon Japan, chiefly by bombing. Others would break into the vast ring of the Japanese Empire from outside it, perhaps by way of Formosa to the Chinese coast at Fukien. An alternative plan which, according to the U.S. press, has influential support in Whitehall, would be to advance by way of Singapore and the Dutch islands to the Chinese coast at Canton. All these plans must overcome the difficulties of an attack on exterior lines.

On the other hand, the Chinese armies based on Chungking are geographically in a position to attack on interior lines. If we could supply them adequately with arms; if we could reinforce them in the air and on the ground with Anglo-American mechanised troops, might they not, relying on the people's support, drive the Japanese with comparative ease out of China? In theory the idea is attractive. In practice we have to reckon with the damage of many kinds that Free China has suffered during the years of isolation. Galloping inflation has wrecked her economic life and undermined the civil administration. Food is so scarce that it is said that the army no longer has the physical strength to undertake an offensive. But the first condition of success is that the Burma road be reopened. Those who reason in this way argue, therefore, that whatever we may do later, the driving of the Japanese out of Burma has priority over every other enterprise. That is a view strongly held by some American soldiers and in particular—so it is said—by General Stilwell, who should know better than anyone else all that can be urged for and against the use of Chinese man-power on the scale that this strategical idea presupposes.

At this distance from the scene civilians must write about these rival plans with modesty. But under whatever handicaps we may have to write, we may sound a warning against the neglect of the auxiliary arm of politics which in Asia, as in Europe, is the gravest defect of Mr. Churchill's strategy. No doubt in the long run, at great cost in life and treasure, we and the Americans can defeat the Japanese by sheer weight of metal and explosives. But the task would be lighter, the struggle briefer and the settlement incomparably happier, if we had the peoples of Asia solidly and wholeheartedly with us. How are they to be won? The main thing is to realise with all our hearts that we ought to win them. If once a mind as ingenious and imaginative as Mr. Churchill's were bent on that end, we should feel hopeful about the result. Is it too late to draft a Pacific Charter to replace the wreckage of the Atlantic Charter? But paper principles pass no longer in international life as sound currency. One item that would impress the Chinese, who are sore after years of indifference and neglect, would be an assurance that Hong Kong shall be restored to them. Experience has proved that it cannot be held, unless the mainland behind it is in strong and friendly hands. It is senseless not frankly to renounce our claim to it at the cost of antagonising the Chinese.

We have next to assure the people of Burma that they will still be masters of their destinies when the Japanese are driven out; we cannot ask them to accept a lower status than the enemy accorded them. Finally, there is the problem of India, which weighs on our good name, not merely with Indians, but with other Asiatics and the Americans also. Lord Wavell has done well since he went to New Delhi, but he has not yet touched the main political issue. Is he free to do so? To postpone all thought of settling the Indian question until after the war is to take a heavy risk. The first indispensable step, we believe, is to grant an amnesty to the Congress prisoners. The next may be to transfer Indian affairs to the Dominions Office. The princes have then to be brought into line with our democratic principles. The initiative lies with us: our prisoners can do nothing.

A LONDON DIARY

EXCEPT that it would have been more tactful to exclude the Chinese along with the American and Russian Embassies from the order suspending diplomatic privileges, I do not see that anyone need complain that a serious source of possible leakage has been stopped. I would not even agree with the argument that this order is an extension of the general tendency to abolish neutral rights. It is merely a proof that this island is soon to be in the battlefront.

* * *

Friends of mine who have a chance of reading European underground newspapers find in them encouraging evidence that the German Opposition, in spite of Himmler's Terror, is growing bolder. There is, in the Danish monthly *De Frie Danske*, the story of a strike said to have broke out in Zeesen, near Königswusterhausen and the heavily bombed industrial village of Wildau. It spread among the metal-workers of the district, until about 30,000 men were idle. It took the Gestapo ten days to bring it to an end. Groups of these workers were shot. Apparently the strike had a political colour: what the men demanded was flatly "peace."

* * *

Ever since that gallant movement among the medical students of Munich was so savagely suppressed, I have wondered how things stood among doctors and students in other centres. By a roundabout track some evidence on this point comes from a Dutch source, the underground students' paper, *De Geus*. It gives the experiences of some Dutch medical students who were forcibly deported to Germany. There they were put to work in a hospital as assistant doctors. They were well treated and were allowed to dine at the doctors' table. However, a few weeks later they learned that the hospital staff had the impression that they had volunteered for work in Germany. To correct this mistake, one of them rose at dinner-time and explained that all students were compelled to go to Germany. Next day all of them were degraded; they had now to work as male nurses and eat at the gardener's table. But one of the physicians, who had been suspiciously cool before, came to see them at once, apologised for having been suspicious of them and offered to bring them in touch with German students. It appeared that a considerable part of the German students were fervent anti-Nazis: this was the case also with the majority of the hospital nurses. There can be no revolution until the S.S. is smashed. But an Opposition there is which will count for something when Himmler is disposed of.

* * *

No part of Europe is so little known to the traveller as the Czechoslovak province of Sub-Carpathia, whose border the Red Army lately now reached. The Munich agreement started transforming it into an Axis fortress, although it was not then clear which of the Axis partners would become its master. According to some experts such as Professor Arnold Toynbee, it was one of the blessings of the Munich agreement that "even the Ukrainians—who are the largest still wholly submerged nation in Europe—have at least secured home-rule in that tiny corner of their vast patrimony that is known as 'Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia'" (*Foreign Affairs*, January, 1939). Germany had, in fact, organised a world-wide propaganda for creating an "independent" Ukraine stretching from Warsaw to the Kuban, with a population of almost 50 million inhabitants, a colony which was to provide the Reich with grain, to weaken and split up both Russia and Poland. This was intended to include Sub-Carpathia on the grounds that the overwhelming majority of its population spoke a language which only differed in dialect from the common Ukrainian.

* * *

It did not turn out so simply as that. The Hungarians claimed that, whatever language Ukrainians spoke, "their hearts beat in Magyar," and that there existed a special non-Ukrainian, "Ruthenian" patriotism which wanted to incorporate Sub-Carpathia into Horthy's kingdom. In point of fact the "pan-Ukrainians," organised in the Ukrainian National Guard, spoke *hochdeutsch* with a fluency which left no doubts about their real origins, whilst the "Ruthenian" chieftains proved to be no other than members or agents of the Hungarian "Rugged Guard," a detachment of Horthy White Terrorists. Hungary at that moment was actually working in the Carpathian mountains against Germany, whose leadership in European affairs her government had accepted. Strangely enough, it was Germany which gave way, possibly in the belief that she would swallow the whole of Hungary anyhow at a later stage. Horthy occupied and annexed Sub-Carpathia at the time of Hitler's march on Prague, March, 1939. The excuse of the Hungarian authorities, propagated industriously in Western capitals, was that they had acted to prevent Nazi expansion. The common Polish-Hungarian frontier established on the Carpathians would, they argued, stem the German tide, in addition to stemming the Russian tide, should this be necessary. How this "Bulwark against Nazism" failed of its purpose, could be seen when Horthy's Hungary accepted with resignation, but without active resistance, Poland's dismemberment; and now, when the Regent-Admiral allowed the Germans to occupy Sub-Carpathia as well as Hungary proper.

* * *

W. P. Crozier, who took over the editorship of the *Manchester Guardian* after the death of E. T. Scott, was a very able man, a terrific worker, solid, reliable, anonymous, indispensable. A newspaper lives on such men more than on the brilliant correspondents and famous columnists. Crozier had all the threads in his hands; he read carefully and critically what everyone else wrote in the paper and, when necessary, he could do most jobs better than anyone else. He was himself an admirable journalist; after he became editor I believe that, in addition to his other responsibilities, he took to writing the main leaders on foreign affairs which meant, of course, a lot of reading, contacts with Cabinet Ministers, visits to London and all the rest of it. When he talked freely, which was not every day, he showed a range of knowledge beyond that which anyone would have thought compatible with so much executive responsibility. He had a sharp wit and a hatred of shams and injustice, which was much less obvious than C. P. Scott's, but not, I think, any less sincere. He was a Liberal by nature and training, a cautious man who believed in understatement and quiet persuasion. He once repeated to me with strong approval the dictum that the job of a *Manchester Guardian* "leader" was to make "Lancashire business-men think twice."

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No one can spend even a few hours, as I did, at Worcester College for the Blind, without coming away enthusiastic about what is achieved, and angry that a larger proportion of blind children do not share this luck. I gather that the general run of blind schools are kindly institutions, homes rather than schools, and the education they offer quite often does not go beyond learning Braille and acquiring a handicraft. (Another remarkable school is the Royal Normal College for the Blind at Norwood, where a very high standard is achieved, especially in music.) At Worcester the dominant idea is that the totally blind can compete in the open market for the entry and practice of most professions. Chief among the intellectual interests are chess and music, with public affairs a good third, I should say, among the senior boys. They play brilliant chess, and they learn to compete on equal terms for University scholarships. Tyler, of Balliol and Cross, the solicitor, are only two examples of Worcester boys who can see nothing, are chess champions and successful lawyers. Tyler is a don at Balliol. I was surprised and interested to learn the variety of professions that seem to be open to blind boys. How was it that they were able, with this terrific handicap, to compete on something like equal terms? Because, I was told, blind boys realise that everything in life depends on intellectual success, are not side-tracked from their purpose by an endless series of distractions, and are so keen that they are apt in a few years to overhaul their competitors and reach adolescence on a basis of equality.

* * *

In conversation with masters and boys at Worcester I came upon a fascinating controversy that I have never heard discussed amongst sighted people. As you watch blind people walking you ask yourself why they so neatly avoid knocking into walls or posts. It is clear that the blind have some "sense of an obstacle" before they reach it. Some think that this is due to sensitivity to changes in air pressure or temperature. The more obvious theory is that a blind man is conscious of a "shadow" of sound instead of light. This is partly confirmed by the fact that the deaf-blind have some, but less, sense of an obstacle, and, more convincing, by the difficulty experienced by the blind when they walk on grass, where their footsteps are muted, and on snow, which renders them so helpless that it is known as "blind man's fog." A master told me a story that certainly supported this view. A blind boy, who is usually good at getting himself about safely, arrived with a bad cut. He had walked into a post. "But why was that?" said the master. "Well, you see," said he, "I passed two posts all right, but then when I got to another a lorry came down the road just at that moment, so I didn't hear the post and ran into it." This seems to me a fascinating subject for research.

* * *

The Polish Ministry of Information is still propounding its riddle: "When is a Military Attaché not a Military Attaché?" No final answer can be given to this conundrum until the official Polish budget figures are published. It was Polish official figures, and no others, that I was quoting. Various denials by the Polish Ministry, including a long letter addressed to me, are based, I suppose, on the device of arguing whether an assistant attaché is, or is not, an attaché. On one point I apologise. I said that not one of these attachés had seen military service; I am told that there are several exceptions. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to A. B. T.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A report based on a recent survey of Pooles Park by a group of voluntary social workers describes Whadcoat Street in this area as one of the worst slums in London. A hopeful attempt was made a few years ago to effect an improvement by changing its name from Campbell Road, but with little result.—*Times.*

The Venerable E. R. Buckley, Archdeacon of Ipswich, writing in the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan magazine to-day discussing whether cricket or football is the more "spiritual" game, has decided in favour of cricket.—*Evening Standard.*

Norman Hartnell, costumier to the Queen, is quite sure that the post-war years will give London the lead in style and elegance. The Court, Ascot, Goodwood, and the opera will once more set the standard of ceremonial and magnificent dressing.

He bases his forecast of the future on the attitude of Marshal Stalin, who has discarded his ordinary tunic for the ceremonial resplendence and gold of the field-marshal's uniform.—*Daily Mail.*

Entrants at Woodbridge Horse Show were warned that the judges reserved the right to disqualify any animal that looked as though it might have been getting more than the restricted rations.—*Daily Herald.*

A paratroop rugby team due to play at Leicester parachuted on to the pitch, won their match and returned to base the same way.

"We intended to practise passing with a ball as we floated down," a player told the *Daily Sketch*, "but on the way we were throwing the ball about in the plane when it went through the jumping hole."—*Daily Sketch.*

I am confident the cat will play a very real part in mental reconstruction when peace comes. Nerves will be frayed, loneliness will be experienced, absorbing interests will be needed, and here the cat, with its soothing temperament, its personal affection and its wide field of possibility, will come as a great boon and blessing. — Letter in *Cats and Kittens.*

OIL AND POLITICS

After the last war an unfortunate quarrel blew up between the American and British Governments—not, of course, the peoples—about the disposal of oil in foreign parts. While President Wilson remained at the White House the quarrel was dignified by the title of "the open door" or "economic rights in mandated territories," but Great Britain was none the less accused of closing the door to foreign oil prospectors in the Empire. When President Harding took office in 1921 dignity was thrown to the winds. His Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Fall, who was later on involved in the Teapot Dome scandal, bluntly declared that Great Britain was trying to dominate the world's oil resources and demanded for the American oil interests a share in the spoils of victory. It is significant that the argument was used that American oilfields had been brought near exhaustion by the wartime drain—eighteen years' supply was the then estimate of their proved reserves—and that American oil companies were entitled to a share in the development of the Middle East fields. To put an end to this unseemly squabble the British Government directed the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which it controls, to hand over a quarter of the share capital of the Iraq Petroleum Company to American oil interests. Having allotted a quarter share already to French oil interests, it could hardly do less. But the French were not pleased, and declared that President Harding's foreign policy was "Europe for the Europeans and oil for the Americans." This struggle for oil was part of the general game of capitalistic grab in the inter-war years—which made nonsense of the pious hopes of the League of Nations.

Is this discreditable chapter in Anglo-American history to be repeated? Significantly, Mr. Ickes, Petroleum Administrator for War, has proclaimed that as a result of war demands and lease-lend supplies, "our oil reserves have a relatively short life-expectancy of fourteen years." (Twenty-four years ago it was eighteen years, and in the interval it has hovered around fifteen years!) Mr. Ickes added: "The capital of the oil empire is on the march to the Middle East. The United States had better move in a big way and fast." The Truman Congressional Committee has underlined and elaborated Mr. Ickes' case. In a recent report it asserted that "the United States have provided upwards of 85 per cent. of the aviation gasoline used by the United Nations . . . and are currently producing about 70 per cent. of all the petroleum used by the United Nations." The report went on to claim that henceforth the public interest would require "a large-scale expansion of holdings in foreign oil reserves by United States nationals"; that Congress would expect the Allies, particularly Great Britain, to transfer to the U.S.A. proved reserves of oil in such volume as would compensate for "excessive depletion" of American reserves through war demands; and that the Government should leave to private oil companies complete ownership and operation of foreign oil fields, but give them full diplomatic support and protection.

Congress has not yet adopted this bellicose oil policy, but action has already been taken by Mr. Roosevelt's administration to show that it means business. Mr. Ickes first proposed that a Government agency, the Petroleum Reserves Corporation, should take an interest in the three Middle East oil concessions owned by American nationals —Bahrein Island (Standard Oil of California and Texas Corporation), half Kuweit (Gulf Oil Corporation) and Saudi-Arabia (Standard Oil of California and Texas Corporation). This move was instantly opposed by the oil industry as a whole. Next, Mr. Ickes proposed that the Government should advance money (about $200 millions) for the building of a pipeline 1,200 miles long to link up the Saudi-Arabian fields, which are capable of big developments, with the Mediterranean. Again the oil companies opposed, being suspicious of New Dealism, and it is significant that the smaller independent companies joined the big combines in voicing disapproval. Needless to say, the thought of American airplanes, troops and warships being sent to the Middle East to guard a Government pipeline filled the Isolationist section of Congress with dismay.

What are the motives behind this surprising turn in American foreign policy? Is Washington really afraid that the war will dangerously deplete American oilfields? Hardly. President Roosevelt himself in a recent report to Congress said: "The total quantity of petroleum products supplied through commercial exports and under Lend-Lease to foreign countries from the U.S.A. in 1943 will be substantially less than the total quantity supplied to foreign countries commercially in 1938." And the gloomy views of Mr. Ickes are not shared by oil experts. They point out that the American "reserve" of 20,000 million barrels (14 years' supply) quoted by Mr. Ickes is not the real reserve at all: it is merely the "proved" reserve of oil which has actually been located. Exploratory drilling in the past has always uncovered new reserves. For example, Canada, which may be regarded for American purposes as a domestic source of supply, is only just being developed as an oil-producing centre. And in addition to the actual reserves of oil, there are reserves of gaseous oil or natural gas and enormous untapped mountains of oil-bearing shale. The gloomy prognostications of Mr. Ickes are difficult to swallow except as a political argument.

What exactly *is* the political argument? Is it a repetition of the 1920-21 nationalistic grab when American foreign policy was conditioned by concern for American capitalist oil interests? Colonel Knox has just told a Congressional Committee that the American oil companies in Arabia had sought Government aid because they feared the British might take over their concessions! It is unlike Mr. Roosevelt's administration to take up the cudgels for "big business," even if it comes from the Democratic South. Besides, the pipeline project is the height of commercial folly. It is an axiom in the oil business that if deep water lies near an oilfield, the output is more cheaply moved by tanker, not pipeline. For example, the cost of shipping Iranian oil from the Abadan refinery to this country used to work out at under 1*d.* per gallon. To make the costly Saudi-Arabian pipline pay there would have to be a through-put of about 12 million tons a year. Hence it seems more probable that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Ickes are moving towards a new American Imperialism—the pursuit of oil power, which Mr. Ickes declares is "on the march to the Middle East."

There are three great basins of oil in the world. First, the Caribbean basin which ranges from Texas to California, down through Mexico to Colombia and Venezuela; secondly, the Middle East, which spreads from Baku down to Persia and around the Persian Gulf to Saudi-Arabia; and third, the Far Eastern archipelago, from Borneo to Java, Sumatra and New Guinea. In the first basin American companies dominate the field, and in the new oilfields which have been discovered in Colombia and Venezuela, Standard Oil and other American companies share developments with the Royal Dutch-Shell group. In the Middle East basin American nationals are again predominant, outside the Southern Persian concession held by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In the Far East, Royal Dutch-Shell interests have control, except for the New Guinea concession which is two-thirds owned by American companies. It cannot be said that America is being crowded out of foreign oil concessions. Her nationals are playing an important part in the development of the world's oil reserves. We may conclude, therefore, that Mr. Ickes' incursion into Middle East oil affairs is actuated by political, not commercial motives. Is it his idea that an Imperialistic move will appeal to the American public in the forthcoming Presidential election, and that Government possession of oil in foreign parts is an essential condition of sea and air power?

Perhaps Mr. Churchill has been putting this notion into Mr. Roosevelt's head. Mr. Churchill, when First Lord of the Admiralty, was responsible for buying a controlling interest for the Government in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Although this was one of the main causes of the oil quarrel with America after the last war, Mr. Churchill, according to his own testament, is very proud of his action. If Mr. Roosevelt really intends to take a page out of Mr. Churchill's history book and to pursue the same misguided policy of oil power as an ingredient of strategic power, then he will bring about the separation of the United Nations, and cause enmity between the Russian and the Anglo-American Governments. For Russia is very much concerned with the oil of the Middle East. The Baku-Grosny fields were declining before the war and were no longer capable of producing much surplus for export. Indeed, it is probable that if Russian industry continues to expand at its pre-war rate, and the new oilfields in the Urals do not develop into large production, Russia will become an importer of oil. Her natural source of foreign supply is, of course, Persia, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia. Persian oil is already pouring into Russia over the new strategic road, and Russian influence in Northern Persia and Teheran is predominant. It is hardly likely that Marshal Stalin will be pleased to see control of the Middle East oil basin enforced by the air fleets of America and Britain.

How far, indeed, President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill have moved away from the Atlantic Charter! Clause 4 of the Charter declared: "They will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access on equal terms to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity." Did this clause imply turning the Middle East oil basin into an international oil zone, including the concession of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company whose control means so much to Mr. Churchill? It is to be doubted whether the authors of the Charter had any such revolutionary idea in mind. If the Middle East oilfields were internationalised, what about those of the Caribbean, where American oil interests are predominant? For the oil talks which are now beginning in Washington the British Government has sent two representatives of the vested interests—a director of the Shell and a director of the Anglo-Iranian. Much depends on the outcome. Democrats will watch these discussions with anxiety lest commercial rivalry between national Big Business groups should again impede the proposed post-war Consortium of Powers.

POST-WAR BLIMP

[Low was asked recently by an American newspaper to explain his "Colonel Blimp." Here is his reply.]

BECAUSE Britain has now a smart up-to-date new army it has been said that Colonel Blimp is dead. Such a wild rumour could not arise except from three misconceptions. First, that he is an exclusively British phenomenon. Second, that he is peculiar to the military profession. Third, that he is mortal. All of these suppositions are incorrect.

Blimp is best identified as Stupidity—the stupidity of the fool who trips over his own confusion of thought. Stupidity without race, nationality, party or creed. If I draw cartoons mostly about Blimps in Britain, it is just because I happen to live there. There are Blimps in Russia, in Africa, in China, all over Europe. (Germany and Japan speak for themselves.) Don't imagine you have not got plenty in America. When I hear some of the things American Blimps say—especially in answer to British Blimps—I often roll off my drawing-board with sepulchral mirth.

No, Blimp is far from dead. But he has Passed On, in the sense of moving to the green pastures of post-war reconstruction. In the old days the economic ideas of the British Blimp were conceived in a spirit of touching simplicity. He used to see himself as John Bull carrying in one hand a cricket bat, in the other, the latest trade returns, being patted on the head by Britannia, who says with dignity, "Well done, sir. England is proud of you." Overhead, the pound sterling shines fixed in the sky. From 1930 onwards the picture was of himself with stiff upper lip, chin up and back to the wall standing alone (or perhaps with the Empire, which he Draws Closer with the Crimson Bonds of Kinship, as though it were a bale of goods) seeking a Revival of Prosperity by Restoration of Confidence in something or other. . . .

But a war like this one works changes. Up till fairly recently Blimp resembled the famous old lady of the London blitz. Her house had been bombed, leaving only a jagged frontage sticking up in a flattened street, but she turned up in the morning as usual to scrub the doorstep, from force of habit. Likewise Blimp, a little while ago. If you introduced the subject of post-war reconstruction he would pull out his doorstep and scrub away just as though the old national economic structure still stood behind it.

Time marches on. To-day Blimp finds himself, somewhat glassy-eyed and red in the face, a sort of refugee among strange ideas, in strange company, under strange new slogans, his understanding of which is frequently complicated, not to say defeated, by his old habits of thought. Instinctively he tries to wed the ancient dogmas to the new revelation, much as the converted savage tries to combine cannibalism and Christianity. "Co-operation and collaboration among the nations? Gad, sir, yes, indeed. But no restriction of the sacred principle of competition, every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. The co-ordination of national policies for mutual prosperity? Gad, sir, by all means! The interdependence of nations is an obvious fact to-day, what? One people can't profit without another's loss, you know." He has lusty applause for the "new reign of law and justice throughout the world" that United Nations statesmen so often talk about; and in the same breath, he has lusty protests against the curtailments of national sovereignty without which it could never be anything but eye-wash.

Like everybody else on this island, Blimp now wishes lasting peace among the nations and a prosperous future for Britain. It is the economic adjustments necessary to the creation of a basis for this peace and prosperity that catch him with his towel off. He is suspicious of economists as being, in general, "left." "These clever fellers," he sniffs contemptuously. "We don't want clever fellers. We want fellers with brains." This unfriendly feeling dates from the invention of income tax, which he has always regarded as fundamentally unsound, undemocratic and unjust. "You can't limit profits when a business is doing well, unless you undertake to make up losses when it's doing badly. Well, then, you can't tax a man's income unless you undertake to make his income up." The distribution of wealth is a sore point with Blimp. "Since the bulk of the nation's money is held by the masses, why should a millionaire be taxed more than one of the masses? Dammit, sir, answer me that!"

Fooling about with money always moves Blimp to indignation. When economists talk about "developing our resources" he is on his guard at once, fearful of financial blasphemy. Mother Money, like Mother Nature, has her laws, which must be left to take their course. Money is the source of all. Labour and the soil are all very well, but Money is Wealth. What Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden without a bankroll is a mystery.

In the proposals of these economists for constructing prosperity and avoiding slumps after the war, he is quick to smell only subversive dodges for that pampering of the lower classes which he used to deplore so in the past. "Full and stable employment forsooth! Without unemployment how are we going to get people to work? It doesn't make sense. Security and the abolition of want would sap initiative and enterprise. I believe, though I've never experienced it personally, that hunger is a great incentive. Why don't people have Initiative and Enterprise like old Lord So-and-So when he cornered the supply of boots in the last war?" Social security and other policies for expanding home markets by raising the standard of living seem to him unsound also. "Industry has to keep the workers—feed, clothe and house them, give them employment to occupy their time," says he. "It can't afford to give them spending money, too."

It is on the subjects of planning and controls that Blimp becomes most incoherent. He has the fixed idea that all plans, *per se*, are vague and idealistic. "Gad, sir, much better to stick to solid realities like Restoring Confidence. Post-war conditions are going to be chaotic. Why confuse them further by planning?" He clings, as a high moral principle, to private enterprise, meaning, not merely private enterprise operating to the desired end of the common good, as the planners say they want it, but private enterprise to mess up the nation's affairs too, if that seems profitable. Not that he is unreasonably blind to the usefulness of planning in certain respects. "Some people need to be controlled. The compulsory mobility of labour, for instance, and that sort of thing." After all, in the long run it depends on who exercises the control. "Public control by these dashed politicians and their dashed bureaucrats? Never! Make an awful mess of it. Control by practical business-men, now, that's different." Control, that is, without interference or responsibility. In other words, private control.

Blimp has a sublime confidence in the ability of big bankers and big industrialists to adjust everything to anything, if they are not "interfered with." (Why he should have this confidence in such people, Heaven only knows, for their wisdom and foresight has not been remarkable in the past. They did not, for example, see the slump of 1930 until it hit them on the nose, and their shirts were on Hitler and Hirohito right up to the war . . . but let that pass.) "Leave 'em alone," says Blimp, "to their merging, their concentrating, consolidating, centralising of management, expanding of influence abroad and so on, and all will be well, confidence will be restored, and the liberty of the Common Man preserved." The spectacle of Blimp and his practical business-men, hard-bitten after long years of pestering Governments for tariffs and subsidies, shouting for "No Interference!" is only equalled by the spectacle of Blimp and his monopolists preserving the liberty of the common man.

Unfortunately, this dream-world, in which Parliament presumably would act as an office-boy co-ordinating the national policy to the tortuous secret dealings of an oligarchy of industrial and financial emperors, displays a fatal weakness. Even Blimp sees that it couldn't do the job so long as Labour retained the right to strike. And Labour shows no sign of yielding its weapons just to oblige Blimp. The answer to *that* situation takes him on—reluctantly—to a further link in his particular chain of fantasy; a coalition of interests, Labour taking a (minor) share of management and a cut of the profits. No interference, efficiency, smooth working, and to blazes with the middle classes. Good night, democracy. Good morning, fascism!

Blimp doesn't like that prospect, but sometimes, when he is filled with fury at politicians, economists, planners and bureaucrats, it seems a preferable alternative to organisation, management and control, open and above board for the benefit of the whole people, with the executives thereof responsible to the people's representatives duly elected to Parliament. "Gad, sir, that's not democracy, it's socialism!" We are all supposed to be fighting the war for democracy against its opposite, fascism, but if you want a good laugh just ask Blimp to describe and compare the working principles of democracy and fascism. "Government of the people, for the people, by the people," signifies three different sorts of people to Blimp; the people who have things done to them, the people for whom the things are done, and the people who do them.

We still have Blimps. So have you. But we both have some wise men, too, to keep them in their place. Thank God for that.

DAVID LOW

HOUSES FOR SCOTLAND

ENGLAND, with 40 million people, needs a million or a million and a half new houses. Scotland, with 5 millions, needs half a million. That is an indication of the difference in the standard of English and Scottish housing.

There are reasons, of course. One is sheer poverty. The worst slums in Scotland, in Glasgow and the mining villages, are in the places which suffered most from slump and unemployment. They could not afford municipal building. Bad tradition probably comes next in order. Scotland became urban early in the Industrial Revolution, with the founding of the Carron Iron Company at Falkirk in 1760. To the industrialists, the workers mattered nothing; and so an age which built palaces for the middle classes—look at the New Town of Edinburgh—built slums for the people. Glasgow was still building one-room tenements late in the nineteenth century.

The Scottish working people have never known good housing, and are just beginning to demand it; it is possible that the indifference to comfort, the asceticism, of the Celt, is a contributory factor. The last considerable reason is the perdurable material of which the slums are built. Freestone is a hard rock, and granite is not very fragile. Pulling down a Scottish slum is a major explosive operation, and however shocking the interior of the Glasgow closes may be, their fabric is good for a thousand years.

Reasons enough, and not one excuse. What a tale is revealed by the Report of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee!* Housing regulations far below the standard of England itself none too exalted. In Scotland, a baby under one is not even counted into the estimate of overcrowding. Eleven people are supposed to be adequately housed in four rooms. Seventy per cent. of houses built by local authorities in Scotland have three rooms; 80 per cent. in England have four or five. The individual rooms are rather larger in the North, and the rents

* *Planning Our New Homes.* A Report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee. *Stationery Office.* 3s.

lower, but this does not compensate for lack of privacy. Apart from the achievements of the municipalities, the older workers' houses are appalling, in too many cases. The report says that 405,000 houses have no independent water-closets, or have no sanitary conveniences of any kind, out of a total of 1,300,000. And this in a country which is rich at least in water. Small wonder that the recent infant mortality report collates bad housing as well as bad food with dead babies. In 1934–1938 the infantile mortality rate of New Zealand was 32, of England 57, of Scotland 77 per thousand.

The Scottish Planning report has no doubt that the houses must be built. It is well written and has good illustrations and plans. It gives, too, the results of a Gallup Poll made among members of the Forces and working people. Scotland has a long habit of "tenements," tall houses divided into one-room houses or larger flats. Perhaps that is why the vast majority of serving men and workers in industry, both in town and in country samples, ask for one- or two-storey houses. The largest vote for modern flats, 14 per cent., came from town workers, and the most unpopular type was the "Flatted house," blocks of two-up-two-down flats. These are said to be intolerably noisy.

The Committee comes down in favour of terraced cottages, with a minority report for detached cottages by Mrs. Jean Mann, the Glasgow town councillor, and Mr. F. B. Preston. The Committee, as a whole, says that flats should not be more than three storeys high; if higher they should have lifts. The lower flats are those suitable for families with children. There should be special accommodation for ageing people, and the majority (but not Mrs. Mann) recommend special small flats for single working women. Mrs. Mann is right in holding that single women do not want to live in segregated colonies, their lives are quite unnatural enough without that.

There are a number of women on the committee, which may account for the unusually good remarks on interior fittings. There are suggestions for unit kitchen furniture, built in and properly fitted into the floor space. This is too small, even so; a working woman must have tiny children in the kitchen with her while she cooks; she should not be cooped in a room 8 feet by 10. It is a fact that it is impossible to work tidily or quickly in too cramped a space; a kitchenette is a labour-wasting device. The Committee has deserted an excellent Scottish tradition, and does not recommend the wall "press." Bedroom walls should be built double with cupboard space between them, as are those in Switzerland. The report does, however, commend the double wall fitted with pipes, to connect with the kitchen sinks on one side and with the bathroom fittings on the other. This, in the plan reproduced on the cover, has the grave disadvantage of setting the bathroom and lavatory combined on the ground floor of a two-storey house. I have stayed in a house so designed, and it was hated by the whole family. The audible noise of the lavatory flushing is embarrassing to the occupants of the living-room, and will cause shy children to neglect themselves. It is a constant nuisance every night for every person in the house. If this device is used, and it is certainly tidy, the solution is to carry the piping-wall up to the upper floor, and have the bathroom there.

The report expects the fittings to be provided with the house, and reckons that four cupboards, five kitchen units and three for the living room would add some £30 to its cost. It also suggests that municipalities should be prepared to provide movable furniture, such as beds, to rehoused tenants who have none.

The houses illustrated are pleasant; they are drawn from the dignified tradition of Scottish stone building, and from the better inter-war English planning schemes. The flatted houses photographed *in terrorem* are grim enough, but no grimmer, to my eye, than the concrete cottages which take their place among the types recommended. There is one bleak sample of the steel house, with which the populace is now faced as temporary housing. In one of her shrewd reservations, Mrs. Mann points out that the existing steel houses are unhealthy and unpopular. Indeed, building materials which conduct cold and damp are not right for Scotland. Brick itself is out of place in a cold climate, and looks horrible in a stone country. The Committee seems to object to the Scottish habit of "harling"—washing—it, but it is the only way to render it tolerable in the landscape.

There remains the problem of planning and design. The committee urges that all new housing should be architect-designed. This is indeed elementary. The control of design by town authorities is not in itself a safeguard. Edinburgh, for instance, has one charming inter-war estate called St. Boswell's, built on a difficult site by a Glasgow private firm. It is next door to a disgraceful one, also private. The glorious situation of the Queensferry Road, with its lovely view of the Forth, has been irretrievably ruined by unplanned housing on what I am told is a municipal scheme; while if the Adam brothers could return to the city they built so finely, and see Corstorphine Hill now, the prey of speculative building, they would be sick in a row on the road. The essential thing is to insist on a really good architect, working with a first-class planner—but first catch your planner.

This report takes for granted that housing is a national service, due to the people. That being so—the thing is to work for really first-class design, material, fittings, and for towns beautifully planned to adorn a beautiful country.

FREDA WHITE

THE ROAD BACK

[This article was written by a British officer in the Mediterranean theatre.]

THE rains came to Italy with October, filling the river beds, sweeping away pontoons and turning everything into a sea of sticky mud which bogged vehicles and clung tenaciously to the soles of the boots. We were wearing tropical kit, and the sudden cold and wet following so soon after the Sirocco heat of Sousse and the heat-cum-volcanic-dust of central Sicily, were an unpleasant surprise. We got wet. We were wet for days without hope of being dry, just waiting our turn to do battle further up the road.

Then it happened. The pain in my chest became general and my head started to race. For me the autumn campaign was over. The Main Dressing Station was twenty miles south, and when I arrived a consignment of wounded, British and Canadian, were being brought in. I took my place in the entrance hall (it was a converted school) and waited. The walking wounded shuffled past, faces set, eyes unseeing and sleepless. Then the stretcher cases. We watched in silence. Nobody spoke. Outside it had started to rain again, and the ambulance drove away leaving a group of gaping Italians. "Evacuate sitting," wrote the Major on my casualty label.

Ten hours later we were south bound, through the muddy plain which, save for the odd palm and the absence of dykes, is so reminiscent of Lincolnshire, then through the vineyards and olive groves, past the northbound convoys and the returning Italian soldiers. The Casualty Clearing Station was in the town hall, a spacious building of grey sandstone in neo-classical style. Another wait. "You'll be lucky if you get beds," they told us. "We're full to three times capacity already." I got a stretcher and three blankets. There were ten occupants in the room. Nobody spoke as I made my bed. They just lay there looking towards me. The place filled up. There was one nursing sister on our corridor. She was small, dark, good-looking and she worked like ten, from early morning to late at night. There was never a suspicion of fatigue, nor did she once lose a natural serenity which accompanied her wherever she went. It was a privilege to be able to help. Lying cases were helped by those who could walk. We fed them, emptied bedpans, carried men with leg wounds to the lavatory. Still they came, and the overflow filled the corridor. There was no unutilised space: British, Canadian, German, all together. The German beside me had a stomach wound, but his face was expressionless. A Belgian officer came in and sat down on a stretcher, his head in his hands. "I must get back," he kept repeating, "they must let me go." He had a piece of shrapnel in his chest and the sister didn't let him go. Presently he fell into a deep sleep, a blanket drawn up over his head. His hair was quite grey, and he looked old for the job. As night fell, I remembered Nevinson's last war painting of a C.C.S. in France, and supposed that was why I had expected cries and groans where in fact there was only silence.

The following day we were evacuated again, this time by train. The train was late. In various postures of discomfort we waited outside the station, a strange contrast in our ragged uniforms to the faultlessly dressed Italian officers who seemed to abound. A mixed crowd gathered to look at us. They stood round in a semicircle, fascinated by the untidy spectacle and held their ground despite bawdy advice to go away. They angered us at the time, although I later thought that they only wanted to be sympathetic and didn't know how to go about it.

After the train, which was clean but full of flies, we went aboard ship. It, too, was crowded. The forward saloon was partitioned: on the right beds, on the left seats. Opposite me were a Canadian lieutenant and a Jewish major with a M.C. ribbon. The latter's nerves were in a bad state. Then the Germans arrived. There were four of them. Three were the finest specimens of male physique I have ever seen, the fourth was slightly built and in great pain. He had a piece of metal near the spine but had refused a stretcher. The slightly built one was senior. He sat next to the Major. The others sat further along. They all looked at their boots and we looked at them. It was rather embarrassing. We were angry at the misdirected hospitality of the R.A.M.C. Would we have been in the saloon of a German boat? Was the hold full? The German said in English that he was sorry, and that broke the ice. Conversation followed more or less naturally. What did he think about the war? No answer to that one. Where was his home? Cologne (a marked increase of interest among the Allies). Was Cologne badly hit? Yes, he had been home a fortnight before and it was a ruin (he didn't appear very concerned about this). Then a revealing remark. "I hope," he said, "that the next war will be fought between professional armies." There was no mistaking his sincerity. He was young. I guessed about twenty-eight. His next-door neighbour had a head shaped like a tilted egg and cruel eyes. A professional killer, he had been at it since 1936. Spain, France, Crete, Africa, Russia. No, he didn't like the Russians. He hadn't been happy in Russia. The fighting wasn't clean. He had been very happy when they sent him to Italy. His two friends spoke no English and sat sullenly thumbing the pages of *Picture Post*.

By night we slept on deck under a myriad of stars. I tried to keep awake to watch Orion rise out of the sea, but the warm eddying winds and the rhythm of the engines were too strong. Even out here life has its moments.

The trip was uneventful, almost boring. Our German companions continued to provide the main source of interest. At first they had been cautious, not stirring even from their seats unless bidden. They became bolder. The ribbon of the Iron Cross, second class, appeared, and the owner was most gratified at the interest shown. Instead of bringing up the rear in the meal queue, they were more prominently placed, even returning for a second helping. Conversation was hindered by the language difficulty and turned mostly on the merits of various weapons. I missed the highlight, which was when the Canadian asked the young German (who was a

Battalion Commander) where he thought they would form their winter defence line in Russia. He considered it carefully and replied: the Dnieper. "Do you not think you've left it a bit late?" said the Canadian (the Russians had crossed it some time before). He didn't know that, and according to reliable report took the news very badly indeed.

Next day we entered port in the pouring rain and were not very surprised to see an empty quayside. One wretched civilian, presumably the harbour-master, stood shivering beneath an umbrella, yelling instructions against the wind to the captain. Those who were able lined the rail to laugh and shout encouragement. An hour later the ambulances turned up. For some of us the journey had almost ended, for others, though we didn't know it at the time, it was just beginning.

ARTISTS' INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

As a rather unnecessary preface quite unnecessarily reminds us we are in the fifth year of war: the walls of the gallery—the R.B.A. gallery in Suffolk Street—make that clear enough. The chief use of a large, mixed exhibition such as this is to give young and little-known artists a chance of showing their quality. But the young, for the most part, are otherwise employed, and have sent either nothing or some remnant with which we are familiar or perhaps a hasty sketch. A few older painters have contributed things which make the exhibition worth visiting; but it must be admitted frankly and from the first that, as a whole, the show is woefully undistinguished.

To illustrate this may I take an example from near home? Some weeks ago, in an exhibition of paintings by Rogers, Buhler and Quentin Bell, at Miller's in Lewes, was shown a tall *Still Life* (*No.* 171 in this catalogue) by the last-named artist. There it appeared a good picture in good company; here it dominates the room. Again, at the Redfern Gallery the other day we saw Jankel Adler and judged him to be an unsubtle and rather bombastic high-flier who, nevertheless, was not without genuine painterlike qualities; here we find ourselves pulling up before his pictures and examining them closely, because at any rate they offer something to examine. Of the younger men of promise Kenneth Martin sends a pretty, slight thing which we have seen before; Ruskin Spear sends that *Nude* which was shown at the Leicester Galleries and discussed—about his law-court scene I prefer to say nothing, and his *Mother and Child* is no more than a note; while Le Bas' portrait of a boy, perhaps an early work, is not to be compared with the portrait of Miss Hulbert (not exhibited here) which rightly caused some stir when it appeared two or three months ago. Of the visitors Fred Uhlman is about the best; but I have seen Uhlmans I liked better than this *Spanish Bridge*. Who Marek Zulawski may be I do not know, but I definitely prefer Bonnard. It is to be regretted that neither Tunnard, Patricia Preece nor Carel Weight has been able to give of his, or her, best; while of new names to be remembered I find only two noted in my catalogue: Edward Eade, whose gaiety I could wish infectious, and K. S. Allen, whose large fruit-piece discovers a genuine liking for paint. Fortunately two artists of name and fame do something to save the situation: Duncan Grant contributes a small but beautiful *Still Life*, and two Lucien Pissarros smile benignly on what must strike them as a lamentably amateurish affair.

It was a lucky idea of someone's to hand over a small room to Mr. Zwemmer, the publisher and dealer. He has produced three exceptionally fine drawings by Henry Moore, all belonging to his best, that is his early, period when he was content to draw like a sculptor rather than a minor prophet. Here also are some admirable paintings by Ivon Hitchens. In the two front rooms are drawings of the London Philharmonic Orchestra by Mr. Kapp.

CLIVE BELL

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

NOT FOR EXPORT

Monarchy may still have a useful and important part to play in the stabilisation and reconstruction of Europe if . . . it rediscovers its essential democratic function, which is fully understood and observed in this country.—*Observer*, April 18th.

The Englishman's affection for the royal institution
Began when wayward Kings had been discrowned;
Our Monarchy's the product of the Glorious Revolution
And the Sovereign is Constitution-bound.
The Continent, a mass of constitutional confusion
Can never hope to imitate the English Constitution.

The European ruler is not seldom contumacious
Denouncing parliamentary control;
The Sovereign of England has only to be gracious,
Refraining from a more dynamic role;
A Monarchy committed to political exclusion
Is the undisputed essence of the English Constitution.

Our Monarch is exposed to democratic adulation,
But the contract on both sides is understood;
The King of England does not hope to rule above his station—
He has but one royal duty—to be good.
His spotlessness in private life fulfils his contribution—
A precedent peculiar to the English Constitution.

Ex-Majesties of England drop ambitions of ascendancy,
No longer they invoke the Right Divine,
Retiring with content to some Colonial Dependency
While Parliament joins up the Royal Line;
But ex-Kings of the Continent plan subsequent intrusions—
They would not stand an earthly with the English Constitution.

The Constitution, not the King, is arbiter of Britain
Since Kings by leave of Parliament have reigned,
But as the Constitution is entirely unwritten
It follows that it cannot be explained.
To harassed Continental Kings it offers no solution,
For only England understands the English Constitution.

SAGITTARIUS

THE MOVIES

"French Without Tears," at Studio One
"The Beautiful Cheat," at the Tivoli
"The Halfway House," at the Regal

The excuse for a second visit to *Le Jour se Lève*, if one were needed, was provided by the other film in the programme, *French Without Tears*, which I had often heard of but never seen. And now—such are the difficulties of getting in at Studio One—I have only seen the second half of it. What I came in for was delightful. In Asquith we still possess one director who has sensibility and can poke fun, who enjoys being English and making jokes about it, as Clair did once for France and Preston Sturges does for America. His Englishmen abroad, clipped and breezy, bingeing, bicycling, learning the lingo and making love, bring back a pre-war idyll. There are ecstatic moments when the double-crossed suitors form a bodyguard to protect a companion who is falling to the same deadly siren. Farce, to be tolerable, must be enchanted. A touch of insight and sentiment raises *French Without Tears* out of the rut of comedies, and makes it not only more touching but a great deal funnier. I hope, some day, to be lucky enough to see the first half.

Meanwhile, going the rounds, I have been unable to discover anything more enlivening than a glossy but ineffectual little comedy at the Tivoli. *The Beautiful Cheat* has Rosalind Russell and Brian Aherne; it is slickly acted and directed; it should go. But, alas, only the motions of comedy are there. A professor secretly writes a best-seller and is beguiled into starring in a film version of it. The transformation that should be so funny—the hero, by the way, is called "The Whirlwind"—turns out rather ruefully. How funny exactly the professor is supposed to be when he gets going I don't know; tosh-writing is handled very tenderly and we are asked to feel for all the millions of "little people" who will respond to it. Smart, but soft in the wrong places.

The Halfway House goes a little deeper than the usual creepy thriller. I remember seeing the first as a play and thinking it a weak concoction of Priestley and Sutton Vane. On the screen it has been refurbished with a war setting, fresh characters, and the Welsh hills which no stage could suggest. The guests at an inn find that the papers, the calendars, the news bulletins, are a year old; gradually it emerges that a year ago the place was bombed out of existence; and in the evening the ghost bomber returns to its ghost objective. Why? Don't inquire too closely; the characters have all reached some crisis in their lives, and Providence is giving them the chance to think twice. This is the new solution required for a generation that doesn't take to ghosts. *The Halfway House* isn't bad; indeed, with Françoise Rosay, Tom Walls, Alfred Drayton, Mervyn and Glynis Johns, it is pretty good. But one has only to compare it with *Thunder Rock* to see the difference between spooks that mean something and hokey-pokey.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

BASIC ENGLISH

SIR,—Without wishing to support the claims of Basic English, may I say that in my opinion H. N. Brailsford's criticism suffers from an all too common confusion. This is due to an inadequate appreciation of the *function* of an international language, which must be clearly defined before the suitability of any aspirant can be properly appraised. What is required so urgently is an *auxiliary*, not to replace natural languages in such activities as "praying, writing verses and making love," but for use in certain fields of essentially international importance. These include: matters related to international co-operation and understanding, conferences on political and social questions, international administration and other stages in the development of world order; the publication of scientific and industrial research; international trade and financial transactions, and so on. For these purposes a language must fulfil certain definite requirements. Fundamentally, the meaning of every unit must be definitive, to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding and to allow maximum accuracy and clarity. Also, for ease of acquisition, the grammar must be simple and *essentially logical*, the use of words and word-groups should not be idiomatic and the vocabulary required for adequate expression should be small, though this last point is of less importance.

It is the first requirement which eliminates every natural language, even English, since the multiplicity of near-synonyms and alternative expressions for a given meaning, which constitutes its richness and literary possibilities, allow too much ambiguity and vagueness. It might almost be considered a point in favour of Basic English that it is *not* capable of Churchillian rhetoric, since rhetoric and invective find their use in a system of politics where a statement is not necessarily an explicit expression of a defined attitude; international affairs should be conducted in a language which can mean only what it says. This illustrates a point so many fail to recognise; an international language does not have to be capable of conveying Shakespeare or of promoting international romances, or even of facilitating universal hospitality for tourists.

The second condition is, however, imperfectly met by Basic English, and it is here at the disadvantage of being derived from a natural language. Much of its operation is idiomatic, for example the English use of the verb-forms "make up," "carry out," "take trouble." Further, its grammatical conventions are wholly those of a natural language and hence not necessarily related to the logical relationships of the content. Its principles will therefore not necessarily be equally acceptable to the users of all languages

In my opinion this need can only be met by a synthetic language in which the literal meaning of each unit can be defined without having to compete with its "natural" and loose use in a "classical" tongue, and in which these invariant units are used according to definite grammatical rules based on logical analysis of the meaning to be expressed, which will be common to educated thought among all peoples. A language such as Hogben's Interglossa serves as an indication of the road to be followed in these respects, and it has the added advantage of a high proportion of internationally familiar roots.

Mr. Churchill's support of Basic English is unfortunate and probably rests on a desire for the universal predominance of an inter-allied rather than an international medium. But surely H. N. Brailsford's suggestion that natural English will be of "more use" to the foreigner expresses an even more uncritical assumption of the universal importance and desirability of things English, the *Times*, American films, and the B.B.C. version of news.

M. W. PARKES

1A Grove Close,
Kingston-upon-Thames.

GERMAN PRISONERS

SIR,—For several months during last year I lectured to the staffs of prisoner of war camps under the Army Education Scheme, and was therefore very interested in your article on German prisoners.

At one of the camps I visited, the Commandant was proud of the fact that the Germans kept such excellent discipline among themselves, as it made the work of the staff much easier. He admitted, however, that any prisoner showing anti-Nazi tendencies had to be removed from his fellows, as constant attacks were made on him. I then broached the question of lecturing to the prisoners with the Commandant, but received no response from him.

Later, at an Education Conference held in the area in which I was working, I brought up this point and offered to lecture to prisoners myself on Politics, Economics and Machinery of Government. The Education Officer was interested and said he would refer the question to higher authority. Since then, due to domestic reasons, I have ceased lecturing, and so did not hear whether the matter went any further.

Prisoners of War have more time for contemplation than most people nowadays, and it seems a great pity that an effort is not made to instruct German prisoners in this country in the principles of democracy. It may be that prisoners would even welcome lectures of this type, since time must hang heavy on their hands.

ALMA L. BIRK

"A POLICEMAN'S LOT . . ."

SIR,—As the Chairman of the National Committee of the Auxiliary Police Association, which in January of this year decided to approach Members of Parliament on the subject of Auxiliary Police conditions of service and pay, I would like to make one comment upon the article "A Policeman's Lot."

The Government's defence for paying police constables on a Civil Defence basis is summed up by the statement of Miss Ellen Wilkinson in the recent Civil Defence Debate, "The various questions of pay and allowances, as far as the Government are concerned, must hang together as a considered whole."

Is this reasonable? It can only be reasonable when all conditions approximate, i.e. prospects of advancement, equality of risk, and similarity of duties.

The Police War Reserve Constable, unlike the Civil Defence Worker, lacks promotion. His work takes him out in all weathers and is not confined to war duties. In the words of the famous Desborough Report, "a policeman has duties and responsibilities peculiar to his calling."

The essential difference, however, is that when the War Reserve Constable is on his patrol he is a self-contained unit, for in an emergency he will normally act as an individual, dependent upon his own good sense and ingenuity. The Civil Defence organisation normally operates on a team basis. There is therefore correspondingly less responsibility.

The influence of the individual police constable upon the public can be considerable—is it wise, therefore, to allow him to become not merely dispirited, but resentful and antagonistic?

GEORGE NICHOLLS

DR. FEIERABEND

SIR,—It seems a great pity to give prominence to a false allegation when you, but not the general public, know the truth or can easily ascertain it. The remarks about Dr. Feierabend, to which you gave front-page publicity in your issue of April 15th, are likely to stick in the minds of people who have no other sources of information about him.

Czech Communists apparently allege that he was a supporter of the Sudeten Nazis and a post-Munich collaborator. The facts are:—

(*a*) After Munich and Prague and the outbreak of war, Dr. Feierabend did indeed remain in office under the Nazis, but at the same time he took a leading part in the work of the underground movement. His dual role was discovered by the Gestapo early in 1940 and, with a price on his head, he barely escaped with his life by fleeing the country in disguise.

(*b*) It is true that in the years between the wars Dr. Feierabend was opposed to discrimination against the Sudeten Germans. He held that equality of treatment could alone make them contented citizens of Czecho-Slovakia. It was a generous error, and I think you would have supported his attitude at the time.

(*c*) Nevertheless, he had no doubts from the first about the true nature of the Nazis. As a believer in Masaryk's policy of reliance on the Western democracies, Munich was a terrible shock to him: but his only thought was to plan and wait for the war which he knew to be inevitable and which would liberate his country.

(*d*) Dr. Feierabend is a liberal and progressive man of wide culture and great energy: he is an ardent patriot and at the same time a keen internationalist. He is now, as previously, a firm believer in the closest co-operation between his country and the Soviet Union. Reactionary policies, defeatism and collaboration with Germany are all alike utterly alien to his make-up.

If, of course, his administrative record or his party's policies do not commend themselves to a majority in Czecho-Slovakia, he will not retain office. But he does not deserve the publication of calumnies by those who owe him respect and sympathy.

406 Duncan House, C. G. W. WHIBLEY
Dolphin Square, S.W.1.

[We only referred to the charges against Dr. Feierabend (of whom we have ourselves no first-hand knowledge) because these allegations form part of a Communist policy which we were discussing. Statements on the subject had already appeared in other journals in this country.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

RENTS

SIR,—I send you the following without comment beyond reminding you that Plymouth has been one of the most heavily bombed cities in Great Britain and that therefore the housing problem is greatly aggravated.

I have been looking for a house since being bombed out in 1941. Last week, noticing that a bungalow, described as having six rooms, was advertised for sale, I called to make enquiries. I found the bungalow—a jerry-built monstrosity with four rooms and two attics—situated in about a quarter of an acre of ground about one mile out of Plymouth. The owner appeared in response to my knock and immediately informed me that he wanted £1,800 (yes, eighteen hundred pounds), and that unless I was prepared to pay this figure it would be a waste of time for me to look at the place.

The following day I mentioned my experience to

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Constable

April 27

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COLLINS

a builder of my acquaintance and hazarded the opinion that before the war one could have bought such a bungalow for £600. He replied—"Well, as a matter of fact, I built that bungalow and it was sold for a lot less than that."

In this same area I am informed when I make inquiries as to any houses ever becoming available, that when they do they are snatched up by officers so that their wives can spend week-ends with them. I do believe that such married couples should be able to utilise every opportunity of spending week-ends together, but it seems unfair that they should monopolise an entire house in order to do so.

The general result is that one has to pay high rents or quite prohibitive prices, and feel wonderfully fortunate to have anywhere at all. Cannot some kind of control be exercised, especially with regard to the price of property?

H. E. HUNT

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

SIR,—In your issue of April 1st I find the following statement by Joad, apropos of a school said to have been conducted by Bertrand Russell. "I cannot forbear to point out (*a*) that it was only with the very greatest difficulty that he managed to keep his school going at all and that in the end he did not manage; and (*b*) that it was a common criticism of children educated there: (1) that they did not know dull facts, e.g. irregular verbs, (2) that they had not the technique for acquiring such knowledge."

To the best of my knowledge and belief, Bertrand Russell conducted only one school. This was Beacon Hill, which he founded, in equal partnership with myself, in 1927. Russell certainly found it difficult to combine his own writing with school-keeping, and he left the school after five years, when it continued under my direction with no other change of staff for a considerable time after Russell's departure. I closed Beacon Hill School only last summer, 1943, after 16 years as its Principal.

Now what exactly does Joad mean by his first statement? Not, certainly, that Russell found the work too heavy; he must mean either lack of finance, or lack of support. Even so, his statement, without explanation, is utterly misleading. Joad is as well aware as I am of the dilemma of the independent progressive school in this society. Such a school has no State grants, nor, unless very fortunate, any private endowments. By its very nature it is not likely to attract the well-established and rich among parents. Yet such a school community does, on uneconomic fees, by the private sacrifices of those who believe in it, including its staff, provide its children with teaching, books, equipment and facilities far and away beyond those to be found in the average elementary school backed by State funds. The "difficulty" of keeping such a school going is that it gives the parents more than they can afford to pay for—which would appear to me an argument in its favour rather than the contrary.

Does Joad then argue that the criteria by which a school should be judged are (*a*) whether it makes money for its sponsors, (*b*) whether its principles are universally popular?

If (*a*) then surely Dotheboys Hall is his mark, if (*b*), then why any pioneers? But I would warn him in this connection that he should be more chary of deriding Beacon Hill, since the White Paper contains many statements about the needs of children, which would never have been there but for the work of that school among others; further, certain recent official circulars on the subject of the sex education of children embody principles which I was reviled for putting into practice only 16 years ago.

Joad offends even more in the second part of his statement. I am used to these "common criticisms" of children who attend what are called "free" schools: in my experience they are usually made by people who like to be amusing at the expense of veracity and other people's creative work, and who evidently find it too "dull" to verify their facts. Like all heads of schools, I can say that some of my ex-pupils have shown academic brilliance, others not. Joad can have details if he likes, but it would spoil his fun. In any case, since Joad is aware that the age range of children of Beacon Hill was 2—12 years (less than 12 in Russell's day) his demands as to their scholastic attainments are somewhat fantastic and exceed even those of the State scholarship examinations.

Lastly, Joad makes one further misstatement when he says that he "has yet to meet" a teacher who does not think that competition helps and examinations are a stimulus, etc. Joad has known me all the time that I have been a teacher, and I hold these views. We were not weak in social arithmetic at Beacon Hill: we knew that co-operation between human beings is the basis of social cohesion, and that fostering the competitive spirit at school is one of the preludes to war. Joad's acceptance of the world as it is, with large school classes and a scramble for jobs, is surely something new for one of the founders of the Progressive League and a prospective Labour candidate. Or isn't it? DORA RUSSELL

SECURITY MINDED

SIR,—A friend and I were trying our "skill" on a "pin-table" in the "local" the other day, when we noticed an American soldier—alone—intently watching. We invited him to join in.

During the game, in an effort to break down the notorious English reserve, I asked him which part of the States he came from. "Oh, about the centre, I reckon," he replied abruptly. I suggested that that did not tell me much. He replied, "That's O.K."

As the "local" was only a mile or so from . . ., I enquired whether he were stationed there, to which he replied, "Say, just what are you 'guys' after?" Feeling that I had perhaps been a little indiscreet, but persevering in my desire to be friendly, I changed the subject and said, "I was in Washington when war broke out in September 1939." At this our American friend enquired whether I meant Washington, D.C. "I never know which is which," I replied, "which is the D.C. one?" To this he said "You should know, I'm not saying a thing."

Finally, in a last desperate effort to improve the atmosphere, I said, "I once saw Washington in cherry blossom time; that was a marvellous sight," but to this came the quick retort, "Say, another crack like that and I'll . . ." Whereupon, of course, I realised that the cherry trees were presented to the U.S.A. by the Emperor of Japan!

E. H. BITTEN

A. J. A. SYMONS

SIR,—I am compiling a memoir of my brother A. J. A. Symons, and shall be very glad to hear from anyone able to offer out-of-the-way information or reminiscences regarding his life and activities.

I am particularly anxious to make as complete a collection as possible of his letters, and shall be grateful for the opportunity of looking at correspondence, which will be copied and returned without delay. JULIAN SYMONS

26 St. George's Square,
S.W.1.

HOW TO SPEND IT?

SIR,—I am in the position of being a Socialist, earning a reasonable salary, who, through the unjust working of the capitalist system, came by a sum of money amounting to £100 per year (approximately). I feel I should like this money to be used for something practical in a socialist sense.

Have either you or your readers any suggestions for the best use of this money? It must clearly be furthering some activity which is not just "patching up" the old system.

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SECKER & WARBURG

BOOKS IN GENERAL

ONCE, when visiting the Bargello in Florence on a singeing August day, I had the temerity to take off my coat. Instantly the guardian came up and touching me on the shoulder required me to put my coat on again. "But this isn't a church!" I exclaimed irritably. "A museum is a temple, too," he replied solemnly. Though we were *en plein Fascisme* at the time, it struck me that this humourless observation would have come more naturally from a German than from an Italian.

At all events, the incident comes back to me whenever I read anything about Stefan George*, but not when I open a book of his poems—though that is often, because George is a poet who easily becomes a habit. Why is this? I think because so many of his poems are short crystallations of moods, and that, since he was not really an objective writer, his opus as a whole lends itself to being used as a kind of breviary by those who find poetry useful as well as decorative. The poets who belong to this category are comparatively few, and to enumerate them tells us something about poetry and about them. Horace, Shakespeare (the Sonnets), Maurice Scève, Goethe, Hölderlin, Keats, Lamartine, Rilke—no doubt there are others: a classical scholar would probably add three or four. I myself would add certain prose writers, like Montaigne, Sénancour and Hazlitt. It is not a question of rushing to a poet in order to ease the intensity of an exaltation, or to cure a moment's depression. A hot bath will do this as well, or better. Poetry does not ease, it intensifies; and what one asks of poets such as those I have mentioned above is that they should set our moods in the context of our whole selves, i.e. in a much larger context than the quality of these moods allows to our unaided perception. They are a means to the integration of personality.

There is nothing obnoxious about this procedure: with the possible exception of Rilke, all those poets would, I believe, have acknowledged it to be a legitimate function of poetical communication. But we cannot imagine using Dante or Milton, or Shakespeare's tragedies, or even Browning, in this fashion. We come to them for something else—for occasions of submission—the sinking of our personalities, with their intellectual and spiritual preferences, in an experience that transcends both writer and reader. The greatest artists are always less than their best works, just as we are less than our most selfless acts.

This consideration brings me back to George, who is possibly the greatest of modern German poets. Here a comparison with Rilke becomes interesting, as well as inevitable, because it raises the question of poetic greatness in general. Let us see if the story of these two poets' different developments will throw any light on the subject.

The early poetry of both Rilke and George is profoundly influenced by French poetry, especially that of Baudelaire and Mallarmé. In maturity, however, the deeper natures of both men asserted themselves, Rilke remaining international in taste and general outlook, George becoming more and more exclusively German. Rilke's philosophic development was towards an increasingly remote individualism—an interpretation of life on a purely personal plane. In the end his isolation seems to have been complete. Wrapped in a cocoon of hypostatised emotions, he leant lovingly towards death. But since he considered all *percepta* in the light of *bibelots*—i.e. as ornamental objects of an experience irremediably private—his vocabulary of images was large. He collected the sensations aroused by people and things as other men collect stamps or waistcoat buttons. Thus he remained essentially *fin de siècle* to the end.

Starting from a similar aesthetic and (be it said) from a personal make-up not as unlike Rilke's as the circumstances of their two lives would seem to imply, George had the firmer grasp of the important difference between a poetical and an un-poetical view of life. This is a real dichotomy, but naturally it is felt as a problem more acutely by those who share the poetical view than by the large majority who do not. Belonging, of course, to the former, George became increasingly convinced that the majority must somehow or other be made to share in the poetic vision, that the nation might thereby be raised to a higher integration of thought and feeling. This was a forlorn hope. Poetry can only be used as a dynamic force when it does in fact underpin the whole life of a society. This was the case up to the nineteenth century, when Science gradually ousted Poetry as the basic victual of the mind. Doubtless there is magnificence in the obstinacy with which certain poets have insisted on ignoring the removal of their function, in the last hundred years; but a crop of dangers has arisen from it, too, as will always happen where confusion exists about an intellectual status. George in particular laid himself open to the gravest of these dangers, through failure to perceive, until it was too late, that regeneration through good poetry can so easily be exchanged for regression through bad, by the purposeful efforts of what banks call "evilly disposed persons." Faced by the blandishments of Dr. Goebbels, George appears to have hesitated; but though in some ways a vain man, he had too much wit and too much intellectual integrity not to end by refusing the Nazis his sanction.

It was a beautiful and sufficient snub, but its roots extend far back into that phase of George's development when the pure poet was still in the ascendant. It was a phase which, given the character of George, could not last. Nearly all imaginative writers go through at least one crisis during which they need reassurance that what they believe to be important really is so; in the case of George the crisis was expressed in *Das Jahr der Seele* and resolved in the next volume, *Der Teppich des Lebens*. By the time George met the youth Maximin, who, after his death, became the subject of what is generally considered the poet's finest collection of verse, *Der Siebente Ring*, the course was set irrevocably.

> The sounding journeys you shall praise no more
> Where perilous and false the water leaps,
> And where the chasm rears its rugged steeps
> Around whose summits heaven's eagles soar.
>
> Learn in these simple fields to apprehend
> The breath that all-too frosty spring allays,
> And that which renders less its sultry haze,
> A willing ear their childish prattle lend!
>
> You find the secret of eternal runes
> Within these hills austerely drawn and pure,
> Not only seas of stone with magic lure,
> No more the wonder beckons of lagoons,
>
> Of great and ruined Rome, the world-wooed dream,
> As vine and bitter scent of oaken grove,
> As they who guard your people's treasure-trove:
> Your waters, green with life, O surging stream!

That comes from *Der Teppich des Lebens*, but I think we can see in it the beginnings of George's Miltonic sense of a new vocation. The ideal took form and precision during the poet's brief but intense friendship with Maximin. Henceforward he took up the burden of justifying Youth to Age, and, in his final volumes, of becoming the conscience of Germany.

> You say that it is much you took as yours
> All I possess . . . but this says nothing yet!
> You came to be the sharer of my hours,
> Your pleading is precarious as command.
> Your shelter I must be where you are perilled,
> The blow encounter that was meant for you,
> For every flaw you have, I am the voucher,
> The burdens you discarded as too grave,
> I must sustain them all—and all the tears
> You ought to weep and that you never weep.

This change of approach—from the purely aesthetic to the didactic—represents a narrowing of purpose, which accounts for the sense of greater austerity, of bareness, of restricted imagery, that I feel when I turn from Rilke to George. But there are other significant differences. Since George's purpose was a transformation of life, his poetry leans towards life, instead of (like Rilke's) away from it. George shows indeed no interest in death, except in so far as it deprived him of those he loved, or as it hindered his conception of the way human beings ought to develop. He did not caress Death with Rilke's lingering and sometimes repulsive affection. The Maximin incident, and what we are told of George's other relationships, seem to indicate that for him—as for few people and fewer poets—love and admiration were identical. At all events, he was a man to whom friendship was the only bond capable of releasing the supreme values of life. George seems never to have questioned the adequacy of this view, with the result that *Der Stern des Bundes* (his penultimate volume) is not only the Deuteronomy of an esoteric religion, but contains much the most obscure and least acceptable verse he ever wrote. Yet even here, and far more elsewhere in his work, we find that sad, melodious gravity, those perfect sequences of sound, that mystery of difficult metres, which have their only close parallel in Tennyson, and especially in *In Memoriam*. Tennyson is the touchstone for these qualities, and also for that deep and unself-conscious expression of belief in platonic love which is the most genuine emotional force in George's poetry. I am indebted to Stephen Spender for this acute comparison and so have the less scruple in pressing it. Examples abound:

> Nichts was mir je war raubt die vergänglichkeit.
> Schmachtend wie damals lief ich in schmachtender flur
> Aus mattem munde murmelt es: wie bin ich
> Der blumen müd, der schönen blumen müd!

and from a later volume:

> Du stets noch anfang uns und end und mitte
> Auf deine bahn hienieden, Herr der Wende,
> Dringt unser preis hinan zu deinem sterne.
> Damals lag weites dunkel überm land
> Der tempel wankte und des Innern flamme
> Schlug nicht mehr hoch uns noch von andrem fiebern
> Erschlafft als dem der väter: nach der Heitren
> Der Starken Leichten unerreichten thronen
> Wo bestes blut uns sog die sucht der ferne . . .
> Da kamst du spross aus unsrem eignen stamm
> Schön wie kein bild and greifbar wie kein traum
> Im nackten glanz des gottes uns entgegen:
> Da troff erfüllung aus geweihten händen
> Da ward es licht und alles sehnen schwieg.

It is difficult not to deplore the fact that George succumbed to the German passion for teaching, since poetry cannot teach in an age in which it is not accepted as a standard of anything outside itself. This was certainly less fatal to him than to his countrymen, but it none the less casts a shadow of tragedy over the latter half of his life—a tragedy very different in character from Rilke's assumption into the heaven he had built for himself. There is something symbolic in the fact that, the museum having turned into a temple, George should have felt the desire to burn it down—as he did in that brutal play, *Der Brand des Tempels*, which is the one real blot on his career as an artist.

This volume is a most useful introduction to George's work. The selection is judicious and the translations, though seldom good poetry, are excellent cribs. As one would expect, the looser the metre and the longer the line, the more acceptable is the English version; the songs, some of which are among the most beautiful in the German language, do not "come across" at all. But gratitude is emphatically due for so serious an attempt to make English readers more widely aware of a very important poet.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

* *Stefan George: Poems.* A selection, printed in German, with translations by Carol North Valhope and Ernst Morwitz. Kegan Paul. 10s. 6d.

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FO'C'SLE

Amateur Sailor. By NICHOLAS DREW. *Constable.* 9s.

Men Dressed as Seamen. By S. GORLEY PUTT, with drawings by ROGER FURSE. *Christophers.* 6s.

Very Ordinary Seaman. By J. P. W. MALLALIEU. *Gollancz.* 9s. 6d.

Fo'c'sle life has not had the predominant voice in the pre-war literature of the sea. There are, of course, Mr. James Hanley's novels. There is a book of Traven's. But these authors are imaginative writers who have wished to describe a drama that is greater than the everyday work of the sea. And they are usually writing of the Merchant Service. In the quantity and quality of books it has occasioned, the Royal Navy has been outweighed. One picks out Mr. C. S. Forester's books; they have the spirit, but they are period studies of a hundred years ago. In general one may say that the Service does not lend itself to tales of the bos'un who hates the first lieutenant, or the captain who shuts himself up, who takes to drink, who goes mad, who sits in silence brooding on his failure to get a better ship or a square deal; while the crew sits around in lugubrious and fatal chorus. Not that the Service is silent; far from it. But when it speaks its voice is oppressively conventional. Here the wartime sailors have had an opportunity, and especially the conscripts who have gone through the fo'c'sle. For there is a drama of the sea which the professional sailor has been through and forgotten: the drama of being turned into a sailor; the drama of growing up a free man and being forced, by experienced hands, to fit into the arbitrary community of a ship which is like no other community on earth. That is the subject of the three books on this list; they are able, individual, alive and absorbing. One of them, Mr. Mallalieu's, is one of the best pieces of documentary writing that I have come across during the war.

Each of these writers liked the life. I never met a sailor who didn't. The permanent, vacant dejection of the soldier, shoved about on his meaningless journeys—they are meaningless to him—seems to be unknown to the sailor. He may hate the sea but it is a love-hate. Life on a ship has shape, an order that everyone can grasp, a meaning which has grown out of peril and usage. On the small ships, like destroyers or corvettes, the men are especially aware that all share the same hardships and the same risks. A battering voyage to Norway or Iceland through storms and icy cold and under threat of air attack, such as Mr. Drew and Mr. Mallalieu describe with laconic vividness, knocks *everyone* half-senseless. An affair like the Russian convoy, which is the tremendous climax to Mr. Mallalieu's story, is the final leveller, an event so fearful, that it gives to every man an inner knowledge of the full virtue of their common labour. Mr. Gorley Putt, in his narrative, quotes the words Admiral Blake wrote home from the siege of Cadiz where his ships lay battered and the crews were living on rotting food: "We are all together now, and behold one another's faces with comfort." These words describe better than most the influx of feeling after the fears and exhaustion of action.

Of these three amateurs only Mr. Drew wanted to go to sea all his life, and his autobiography is the sober idyll of a boyhood and youth spent in the passion for sailing. He was brought up on the South Coast and there began his love of the sea and his uneasiness which was part of the love. Amateur sailing on the Thames, Channel cruising and racing followed. Like music, sailing is half mathematics, a minor verse of continually exercised and altering estimate and judgment. From the Thames he went to Dunkirk; and then after a period at the "King Alfred" he got his commission and went on convoy work in the most strenuous of small boats—the corvette. Mr. Drew writes with sensibility and his portraits are quiet, observant and fresh. Hearty, conventional books are usually written on this theme, but Mr. Drew avoids that. Light, grave, and apprehensive, he describes an experience that is real, inside and out. One gets from him the officer's point of view, which is missing from the two other books.

Mr. Gorley Putt is a good deal more high-spirited and full of himself in a pleasant way. He is the commission candidate in the fo'c'sle, telling you how one knuckles down, and he is a good deal more sensible and observant than his manner would suggest. The drawings by Roger Furse are admirable. Where this little book generalises the story, Mr. Mallalieu moves slowly and in detail to a larger plan. He takes a group of men from the moment they join the Navy, through their training period and finally on to a destroyer which goes on the Iceland run and then on the Russian convoy. He observes the gradual process by which they are trained for the sea and, at last, turned into sailors. Mr. Mallalieu is not new to documentary writing, and this book is a masterly example of this research into living which observes but does not insert emotions or literary conceits; which can set out character in relation to daily work, and not lose itself down by-ways; and which, when the narrative arrives at the two large battle pieces at the end of the book, can rise with precision to the occasion. Simple precision in the strangeness of modern sea warfare is a great virtue.

Another virtue of this book is the easy way in which it imparts social information. There are one or two characters who are full-length personalities. Calamity Taylor reading the 23rd Psalm at the blasphemers and indeed in all his passages with the Buffer, is wonderful. "What were you before they tried to turn you into a sailor," roared the Buffer. "Happy," replied Calamity. The unforced flow of Mr. Mallalieu's narrative manages many things at once: to be patiently informative and descriptive, to catch the characters and words of men at work and mucking-in together, to catch everyday sea life, battle, air attack and sub-hunting, and to detect the feelings of ordinary men about these things. He is never boring. He is never second-rate. He is, one feels at the end of the book, really impressive.

V. S. PRITCHETT

LEONARDO

Leonardo da Vinci. Edited by LUDWIG GOLDSCHEIDER. *Phaidon Press Books. Allen and Unwin.* 20s.

It may well be that this is the best of a good series, the most scholarly and satisfying production of the Phaidon Press. So accurate are the reproductions of drawings that often, sizes being equal, they are hardly to be distinguished from originals. In fact, this portfolio, which costs a pound, will be to amateurs as valuable as a priceless collection. There are very few coloured illustrations; and anyhow Leonardo's colour is, as a rule, so displeasing that for once the artist has not been traduced by the machine. The editing, that is the choice of and notes on drawings, the annotation of Vasari's Life and the subsidiary documentation, is exemplary; which is not surprising seeing that it is the work of that fine scholar Ludwig Goldscheider, who makes felt his acumen and erudition with tact and not without humour.

When Leonardo offered his services to Il Moro in 1482 or 1483 he set forth in nine clauses and doubtful taste his abilities as military engineer and armourer and added, by way of postscript as it were—"In time of peace I believe I am a match for anyone in architectural undertakings, public or private. Also I can lead water. Furthermore, I can execute works of sculpture in marble, bronze or terra-cotta; while in painting I can do as well as another, be he who he may." Add to this Vasari's statement—"His knowledge of art, indeed, prevented him finishing many things which he had begun, for he felt that his hand would be unable to realise the perfect creations of his imagination, as his mind formed such difficult, subtle and marvellous conceptions that his hands, skilful as they were, could never have expressed them"—and you will probably agree that between them they had said what Americans call a mouthful.

To sustain this happy and expressive metaphor, I will make bold to maintain that if ever man bit off more than he could chew that man was Leonardo da Vinci. With his scientific pre-occupations, his hydrostatics and aerostatics, his astronomy and meteorology, his biology, chemistry, ornithology and excursions into the poliorcetic art, I am not concerned, or concerned only to say that if he really did invent a flying machine, the men of the Renaissance showed their judgment in letting the matter drop. But in the arts, or at any rate in the arts of painting and sculpture, his versatility was his undoing. Or, perhaps, it would be fairer to lay the blame not so much on versatility as on a common consequence of versatility—a taste for complications and excessive delight in untying them. Leonardo was by nature the least spontaneous of artists. In the middle of his task he would invent a new difficulty for the pleasure of trying to surmount it, which, as often as not, he failed to do; and, as a result, it is arguable that he never finished a picture or a statue. His unlucky experiments in chemistry led to his pictures deteriorating in his life-time. Of the hundreds of thousands who have stood in virtuous hebetude before *The Last Supper* happily only a few have known that they were contemplating the work of a fifth, if not a sixth, restorer. To compare the description by Vasari with the picture in the Louvre is to realise that what we call *La Gioconda* is something very different from the portrait the master left unfinished after working on it during four years. The figure of St. Anne in the same gallery—the bulk of the picture is, of course, mere school-painting—is doubtless nearer to the master's mind and gives a sharper impression of his splendid gifts. But if we are to understand just how splendid these gifts, which he chose to squander, were, we must try to recall *The Adoration of the Kings* in the Uffizi or the portrait of Ginevra de' Benci in the Leichtenstein collection. (It is amusing, by the way, and perhaps not unprofitable to remind ourselves that till a few years ago this last picture was attributed by the experts to Lorenzo di Credi.)

The superiority of these two works, though the *Adoration* is so far from being finished that a pedant might describe it as no better than an "under-painting," comes precisely of the fact that one is only a beginning and that both are early. Neither falls a victim to the master's passion for making trouble. In later life his pet problem was the creation of relief. Vasari, as usual, leaves us in no doubt:

> So marvellous was Leonardo's mind that, desiring to throw his things into greater relief, he endeavoured to obtain greater depths of shadow, and sought the deepest blacks in order to render the lights clear by contrast. He succeeded so well that his scenes look rather like representations of the night, there being no bright light, than of the lightness of day, though all was done with the idea of throwing things into greater relief and to find the end and perfection of art.

"He succeeded so well," that, besides making his own pictures at first sight downright disagreeable, he cast a blight over the whole school of Lombardy. Leonardesque chiaroscuro is something which even the casual gallery-goer notices and dislikes.

Doubtless Leonardo was one of those "complete men of the Renaissance" about whom we used to hear a good deal in the days of J. A. Symonds; but first and foremost he was an intellectual, always willing to allow the intellect to unpick what sensibility had woven. That is not the way of the painter. His pictures were not for him expressions of emotion but pretexts for proposing and attempting to solve problems: technique was not a means of expression but a bag of tricks. His drawings, however, are another matter. In them—in the best of them (e.g. studies for *The Last Supper*, for *St. Anne*, studies of hands)—there is comparatively little elaboration: it is from a word,

or rather a perception, to a blow. One of the acutest observers that ever lived, he was fascinated by all he saw, and had to get his observation stated before it vanished. Wherefore, often he draws with a confident freedom of which his painting gives no hint. He saw things as vividly and quickly as Degas, and could realise his vision with the certainty of Holbein, though not, I think, with the beauty of Raphael or Ingres. But even in his drawings psychological preoccupations sometimes freeze the genial current of his soul, creating drought: the mood which drew the heads for the Anghiari cartoon was surely that which wrote—"By far the most important point in the whole theory of painting is to make the actions express the psychic state of each character." Yet, when all that is detrimental has been allowed, it must be agreed that Leonardo possessed that one talent which is the *sine qua non* of great draughtsmanship: he could, when he would, grasp and render his vision as a formal whole and not as the sum of its parts. A head drawn by Leonardo, at his best, is not an agglomeration of features: it is a head. Of how many artists can one say as much?

In this country the amateur is particularly well placed for enjoying the drawings of Leonardo. The Windsor collection is unsurpassed; and the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert, Oxford and Chatsworth together are a match for it almost. Now that these are inaccessible comes this magnificent and absurdly cheap portfolio. Modestly, the editor proclaims—"This is not a book on Leonardo. It is rather a book by him." Very well: let us be grateful to them both.

CLIVE BELL

GEOLOGY

Geology for Everyman. By the late SIR ALBERT SEWARD. *Cambridge.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Teach Yourself Geology. By A. RAISTRICK. *English Universities Press.* 3*s.*

Geology in the Service of Man. By W. G. FEARNSIDES and O. M. B. BULMAN. *Pelican Book.* 9*d.*

Hundreds of books, big and small, are written every year in the hope of luring our ignorance, of side-tracking us into an avocation or hobby. We feel, if we are young, indiscriminately keen; if older, our enthusiasm is tinged with doubt—are we still *capable*, given the energy, of learning at all? The titles of the books are artfully designed to allay these misgivings; Everyman slips in (and if Everyman, why not I?); or instead of going back to school, the reader is invited to teach himself. It needs many such inducements and pretences of making easy to lead me to subjects not my own. Bee-keeping, Arabic, the calculus, astro navigation, physics, meteorology, salesmanship, shorthand, Chinese—to quote only a few of the directions self-improvement may take—seem to me not only (so far as I am concerned) unmasterable activities, but devoid of that pecking-and-tasting interest which I find in astronomy, psychology or the weather. From time to time, I try a new direction, tempted by science and by the high level of its popular exponents. Geology has for years presented an impermeable blank wall; ever since, in fact, as a child I associated going for walks with "Now I am going to chuck you a question. Is that New Red Sandstone or Old Red Sandstone? Don't stop to think; either you know it, or you don't.". I didn't, as a rule; and the other distinctions, between stalactites and stalagmites, beds and deposits, seemed to me equally dry. Such knowledge made otherwise delightful places a bore.

Geology is not a subject I have felt impelled to approach since. It doesn't, as they say, "lend itself" easily to popularisation or skimming. So at least I judge from the three books I have been reading, all of them lucid, authoritative and well-written; *Geology for Everyman*, in particular, is the work of an expert and cultivated mind. Collectively, they have stimulated interest in an obviously tricky subject, and yielded curious and absorbing moments. Some of the details about fossils, volcanoes, the earth's core, the Coal Age are fascinating. Among the facts that have dazzled me I remember these: the indestructible pollen of certain trees, preserved in peat, is recovered after thousands of years and analysed under the microscope; when Krakatoa erupted in 1883 the dust cloud travelled three and a quarter times round the earth before disappearing, and this was responsible for the remarkable sunsets which inspired the paintings of Turner's early period; among the lesser known extinct creatures revealed in fossils is one, the Eurypterid, six feet long and resembling a giant scorpion (specimens can be seen at the South Kensington Museum). I am interested also to learn that Bauxite was so named after Les Baux, the *petites alpilles* outside Arles, and I did not know before (this will give some idea of my ignorance) that "marble" is merely the trade name for various polishable rocks.

For the rest, the history of the globe, in sometimes desiccated terms, has passed through my head, leaving a sediment of information, if no very lasting body of knowledge. That is my fault, perhaps, rather than the authors'. The late Sir Albert Seward writes gracefully, with a touch of aestheticism, which should attract converts among those who have the makings of geologists: amateurs, by the way, have been responsible for many important discoveries, as well as a great deal of donkey-work, in geology. Of the three books, his is the most continuously readable. *Teach Yourself Geology* and *Geology in the Service of Man* cover a much wider field, and deal also with the uses of geology as applied to water, coal, petrol, metals, chemicals, precious stones. The first, especially, provides an admirable and packed introduction to its subject. None of the books is intended for experts, and I regard myself on this occasion not as a reviewer but as a general reader. Very general indeed.

G. W. STONIER

THE LADIES

The Pool of Ch'ien Lung. By LADY HOSIE. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Rungli-Rungliot. By RUMER GODDEN. *Davies.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Behind these two books lies the long tradition of the Englishwoman abroad, the enormous zest for new places and new ways of living coupled with the small alleviations of the tussore sunshade and the special pot of marmalade on the table. Often the drawback to such traveller's tales is that one meets too persistent and too pervasive an individuality. In Lady Hosie's case her enjoyment spills over constantly, and colours her picture of a summer in Peking. Miss Godden, on the other hand, is the coolest of observers; her record of a winter spent in the foothills of the Himalayas is detached, perceptive, yet disjointed.

Writing in England in 1943, Lady Hosie casts back in her mind to the months she spent as the guest of two Chinese schoolmistresses in Peking, just before the Japanese invasion. Miss Way and Miss Lo are charming creatures, struggling in face of debts and Government regulations to educate Chinese girls for a wider, if more uncertain future. The friendship between the three women, obviously tested and sincere, has in this description an embarrassing staff common-room warmth. But the day-to-day record of their meticulously-ordered lives, the excursions to the

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theatre and on donkeys to the hillside temples of Peking, has a documentary appeal. Having lived in China for many years, educated partly in a Chinese school, Lady Hosie must know China well. It is perhaps because of this very familiarity that her book lacks distance, lacks strangeness; again and again one seems to catch a flavour, not of Peking but of Bath or Cheltenham. It seems as though the charm which to the modern Chinese is their country's most misleading export has become for Lady Hosie a flowered and lovely, but impenetrable screen.

Miss Godden, a practised and distinguished writer, brings to her most casual note a fineness both of style and observation. Her book is the slenderest record of a winter spent in a tea-planter's bungalow, but the detail takes shape solidly. Chinglam stands out, with its bare white rooms and pungent-smelling fires, its tumbled garden with the lemon trees and roses, below it the green slopes of the growing tea and the valley with the clouds drifting and parting to show the river, above only the gleaming ridges of the Himalayas. Almost nothing happens; the three children live their absorbed and separate lives, endless servants with small defined duties come and go; later there is a Christmas tree felled by the sulky woodcutter who brings his children to the party, and is awed to see the branches all alight with candles. One learns a good deal about the growing of tea, only a little about Miss Godden, for she is no exhibitionist. She remains shadowy, though everything seen through her eyes is clear, like the mountain air. Rungli-Rungliot, "Thus far and no farther," is the name of the village built at the point where long ago the floodwater was turned back by a gesture of the llama's hand; it is a proper title for this reserved, fastidious book.

AUDREY HILTON

NORTH AFRICA

Desert Journey. By GEORGE RODGER. *Cresset Press.* 15*s.*

The Frontiers are Green. By RICHARD DIMBLEBY. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Triumph Over Tunisia. By T. H. WISDOM. *George Allen & Unwin.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Eighth Army. *H.M. Stationery Office.* 1*s.*

Over to Tunis. By HOWARD MARSHALL. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 9*s.*

If only for its illustrations *Desert Journey* must come first. This is understandable, for Mr. Rodger was representing the American magazine *Life*. He writes well, too. His initial assignment was to cover the Free French Forces in the French Cameroons. These travels begin in 1940, the day the author sailed from the Clyde; his troubles began on his arrival in West Africa. With the determination that seems to be a characteristic of war correspondents, he overcame French resistance. He was given permission to join General Leclerc in his campaign against the Italians. Also he was given an interpreter, the Baron, and together they faced a three thousand-mile journey, half of which is uncharted and without roads.

The book is deservedly monopolised by this journey. With inefficient gear, they experienced sand-storms, mechanical and petrol troubles, illnesses, and shortage of water. The Baron was not a guide and so losing themselves in the desert and just missing death from thirst became commonplaces. Perhaps, however, the Baron was the greatest trial. This virulent, aggressive little man was a good organiser, but beat the coloured boys unmercifully, and persisted in visiting every planter and official to be found; the journey was so delayed that General Leclerc was only found when his campaign was won.

But Mr. Rodger saw plenty of war before completing his assignment. He followed it, recording and photographing skilfully, to Abyssinia, Eritrea, Libya, Egypt and Transjordan. The result is an honest book, pretending to know neither the intentions nor the mistakes of the General Staff. War apart, it is an interesting travel book.

The Frontiers are Green has much in common with *Desert Journey*. Mr. Richard Dimbleby's broadcasts led him to many of the zones visited by Rodger. Where their experiences coincide, the accounts agree, despite differences of temper. They followed different trails. Mr. Dimbleby brings to his travels a fine good-humour and is at his best perhaps when he describes the almost anguished efforts of Turkish officials to remain brooding on their neutral nest. The author was an early spectator of the war in Greece and gives some vivid details of the ill-equipped Greeks pursuing and defeating the splendidly accoutred Italians. He journeyed with the 8th Army in the early days, when it was not the great army we know, but beginning to evolve.

Triumph over Tunisia is, according to the publishers, the first book dealing exclusively with the air war over Tunisia. Wing-Commander T. H. Wisdom, having thus limited himself to what he obviously knows best, has produced an informal book of flying personalities and actions. His story begins with Dieppe, taking this raid as a rehearsal for North Africa, and ends with the African victory. The spotlight is always on the pilots, the ground crews, and the planes, and he gives character and individuality to these air actions.

The Eighth Army is a publication by the Ministry of Information and is well up to their standard. It covers the growth of this Army, giving a clear, comprehensive history, yet keeping the many units and their varied duties in good view and perspective. The Navy and the R.A.F. are not neglected, but as the concentration is on the military side of the war they take a back place, without loss of honour. Like its companion documentaries it contains numerous excellent and useful photographs and maps. *The Eighth Army* is a very good record, never dry, and remembers always those individual acts which add up to make a first-class fighting force.

Mr. Howard Marshall is ambitious and earnest in *Over to Tunis*, where he sets out to give "a balanced, comprehensive and outspoken account of both the military and political sides." He deals with the First Army from the North African landings, but only too often they are lost in the political background. Mr. Marshall, too, loses himself occasionally and is more often a strategist and recorder than a reporter. He has realised the dangers inherent in this attitude and has done his best, but an author's best must succumb to wartime censorship. *Over to Tunis* is a sober account of a campaign and an honest attempt to explain it, despite all the difficulties. He gives a good account of himself in this unequal struggle, and allows well-deserved merit to the sometimes overshadowed First Army.

CHARLES LANDERY

Week-end Competitions

No. 742

Set by G. W. Stonier

Competitors are asked to describe, in not more than 200 words, the most baffling encounter they have known.

Entries should reach this office by the first post of Monday, May 1st.

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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 738

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Competitors are invited to compose "epigrams," in the Greek Anthology sense, on English domestic themes. They must be in verse of four or six lines. As a reminder of a Greek epigram I quote a prose version by Forrest Reid:

"These toys of his boyhood—his lucky ball, his noisy boxwood rattle, the knuckle-bones he loved, the top he spun—Philokles hangs up here as gifts to Hermes."

Report by Thomas Smallbones

Competitors evidently enjoyed this competition; they let themselves go! And the pleasure for the setter was only blunted by haverings and hesitations, the difficulties of decision. The qualification "domestic" was widely interpreted, as it was meant to be. The sample quoted was only there to ward off too English an interpretation of the word "epigram" in the sense of pithy or pointed, to which the quatrain in English too readily lends itself. Another difficulty of the quatrain seems to be that its rhythms have been so thoroughly explored that many poems in it have the air of pastiche. The winning entry wins by virtue of entirely avoiding this and Z. E. K. produced a poem entirely original. I suggest that it gains a first prize of 30*s*. This allowed me to award five ten shillings's which after much sifting I awarded to the poems marked with an asterisk. I wish there were space to quote more.

FIRST PRIZE

Our cherry's precious froth will subside and disappear;
What men shall have been conceived, what bewildered warriors died,
Before we may gravely regard the red and heavy cherries,
Feeling the anger of Joseph at heart for the man denied?

Z. E. K.

Hymen! The double bed, the thrice-blest pram,*
Connubial shelves well stocked with fruit and jam,
Greater and lesser, all are dedicate
To Thee, Protector of the married state.
But, Aphrodite, O, for Thee alone
Th' illicit couch, the fork-tongued telephone!

J. M. H.

On Hearing a Child Crying*

A week-old infant, desolately wailing,
Of what imagined sorrows I drank deep!
Now, life behind me, into Lethe sailing,
My woes are real, and I ashamed to weep.

ALLAN M. LAING

Partings

How long ago Hector took off his plume,
Fearing, in Troy, his little son would cry,
Then kissed his sad Andromache good-bye—
And now we three in Euston waiting-room.

F. C. C.

The Disappointed Husband

I do not at all care for my wife's views;
She likes THE NEW STATESMAN, radicals and Jews;
I wish I had married a woman decent, restrained, sedate,
Like Mrs. Bellamy, say, at Number Eight.

G. DE VAVASOUR

Spring*

When Euphorion was drowned
Flowerless lay the frozen ground.
Faithless earth! that soon forgets,
And decks herself with violets.

G. DE VAVASOUR

A Road Block*

This stony polygon; these massive blocks,
Aligned and marshalled for a Titan's game,
We raised with toiling hands and sober hearts,
In welcome for a foe—who never came.

C. F. BEST

American Soldiers in the Park

These men have come across the pathless seas
Not knowing clearly why they had to come:
Uncomforted beneath our rainy trees
By love or lounging or by chewing-gum.

F. C. C.

Unearthed in the Vicinity of a Refuse Dump*

Nosebags for Mars! Nosebags for Mars!
Blood-red amidst the warrior stars
He chews old newsheets, corset-bones,
Glass bottles, tins and damson stones.
Fill up, fill up, lest mad with hunger he
Devour your sons, your homes, your liberty.

M. R. DUNNETT

On a Mob-cap

A servant faithful to her mistress wore
This cap, against the dust to guard her hair;
(Her only foe the dirt of hearth and stair).
She serves another Mistress, faithful still;
To-day, another covering shields her head
Against the death descending from the air.

H. R. THOMPSON

This was my table, this the chair I sat in,
When first they set me down to study Latin.
For sheltering then my "Deadwood Dick" I'm able
To give you now my thanks, *Mensa*, O table!

LITTLE BILLEE

Here Annabel her pigtail lays,
And with it all her junior days.
Tuck'd soft in tissue let them be,
For she may need them presently.

C. G. J.

If your friend be old you must talk to him
Of years long past;
To him the Present is a cruel thing
Which cannot last.
We who are young have fresher things to say:
But look! My hair is also turning grey.

Anthea Killed in Action

Dark falls. But now the darkness cannot hide
The new raw crater where Anthea died.
For, at the close of her too transient day,
Venus and Venus' doves she put away;
And left, all useless on a stricken field,
The battered remnants of Athene's shield.

JOHN MAXWELL

Epitaph on Blimp

"Blimpius heu! periit." Quis plorat? Quis nisi Dives
Flet cum Stultitia iunctus obisse senem?
Nox aeterna tuos, Blimpi, tenebraeque tenebunt
Manes. En, vivis clarior orta dies. . . .

I. C. SAUL

Double Summer Time

Phoebus, upon thy altar here I lay
Half-opened daisies from my sleeping lawn
In expiation. We await thy day
And not, as impious men, usurp the dawn.

HENRY WRAY

Here in the stranger's house at dusk I wait,
In the well-meant, bookless room, cold as a stone,
Irked by the fidget of the wind-swung gate,
Wishing I were not so much alone.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

The housewife Emily is dead before her prime:
In haste she tossed her bag and ration-book aside
And hurried on to reach old Charon's queue in time.
Hatless, she heads the line and waits in happy pride.

ELLEN EVANS

Scholastica, this note I pen
To stop my daughter, Prudence, sighing.
She will be good—reform again,
I know she'll try. She's always trying.

H. F. BATTEY

THE NATIONAL BANK OF INDIA

FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA

THE ordinary general meeting of the National Bank of India, Ltd., will be held on May 2nd at 24, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.

The following is an extract from the statement by the Chairman (Mr. R. Langford James) which was circulated with the report and accounts:

The total of the balance-sheet constitutes a record for the bank at £61,867,357, an increase of £7,500,000 over the figure for the previous year.

We are now in the fifth year of the war and the way in which banks and business concerns in general, both in this country and in the Dominions, have adapted themselves to wartime conditions is alike remarkable and laudable.

For India 1943 was a year of conflicting experiences: practically universal financial prosperity on the one hand and a distressing shortage of foodstuffs in certain parts of the country on the other.

Six years ago I drew attention to a statement made at that time by the late Sir James Taylor, then Governor of the Reserve Bank, to the shareholders of that institution. Sir James pointed out that the area under cultivation in India was not keeping pace with the growth of population; as he put it, "the pressure of population on cultivated land" was a matter for concern. How correct he was in his views last year's famine conditions appear to indicate. I have seen it stated recently in a responsible publication that, against an increase of 27 per cent. in population in the last 20 years, the area under food crops had increased by only 1 per cent. A question of the first importance to India is the urgency of growing sufficient food for the adequate nourishment of a population increasing at a phenomenal rate.

Personal

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WHITHER Nations? Why Stalin and Gandhi? "Proof that God Exists Universally" ("Russian Might Foretold"). Bklt. 1*s*. 1*d*. post free, F. J. Bayley, 32 Rosslyn Rd., Shoreham, Sx. World Affairs Interpreted.

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